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Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

**Southwestern  
Region**



United States  
Department of  
the Interior

Bureau of Land  
Management

**New Mexico  
State Office**



# Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project

**Santa Fe National Forest and Taos Field  
Office of the BLM in Santa Fe County,  
New Mexico**



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# Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project

**Lead Agencies:** USDA Forest Service and  
USDOI Bureau of Land Management

**Cooperating Agencies:** U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, City of  
Santa Fe, NM and County of Santa Fe, NM

**Title and Location of Proposed Action:** Buckman Water Diversion Project,  
located in Santa Fe County, NM

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## Abstract

This environmental impact statement documents an analysis of the effects of a proposal to divert water from the Rio Grande. The proposed Buckman Water Diversion Project is designed to address the immediate need for a sustainable means of accessing water supplies for the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, and Las Campanas Limited Partnership. Most of the water to be diverted would be derived from the San Juan-Chama Project, a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation inter-basin water transfer project. The remainder would be “native” water rights owned by the parties and diverted from the Rio Grande.

The Proposed Action would include a diversion structure at the Rio Grande; water transmission facilities including pumps and booster station buildings, water tanks, settling ponds and pipes; water treatment facilities, electric power improvements; and road improvements necessary to build and operate the facilities. A No Action Alternative was also considered, which means none of the facilities proposed would be authorized. The lead agency decision makers have identified

their preferred alternative based on the following principles: (A) Favor alternatives that have the least adverse impacts to resources managed by the Federal agencies; (B) Favor alternatives that avoid creating new utility corridors through otherwise open space; and (C) Favor alternatives that allow for maximum flexibility of the applicants to work out solutions together. Where impacts to Federal lands are similar, lead agencies may prefer more than one alternative. These principles have led to selection of a set of preferred alternatives that will avoid disturbance to the historic Buckman townsite, minimize visual impacts on viewers from White Rock Overlook and along Buckman Road, and avoid creating new utility corridors. The environmental impact statement discloses details of the alternatives and consequences of those alternatives.

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## List of Acronyms

ac	— acre
ac-ft/yr	— acre-feet per year
AQB	— Air Quality Bureau
BBER	— Bureau of Business and Economic Research
BLM	— Bureau of Land Management
BOR	— Bureau of Reclamation
BS	— Booster Station
Buckman Project	— Buckman Direct Diversion Project
CDM	— Camp, Dresser & McKee
CEQ	— Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	— Code of Federal Regulations
cfs	— cubic feet per second
City	— City of Santa Fe
CO	— carbon monoxide
County	— Santa Fe County
dB	— decibels
DO	— dissolved oxygen
EIS	— Environmental impact statement
EPA	— Environmental Protection Agency
FEMA	— Federal Emergency Management Agency
FICUN	— Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise
Forest Plan	— Santa Fe National Forest Plan, 1987
FS	— USDA Forest Service
ft	— feet
FWS	— U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
gpm	— gallons per minute
ISC	— Interstate Stream Commission
Las Campanas	— Las Campanas Limited Partnership
L <sub>dn</sub>	— average noise level day and night
L <sub>eq</sub>	— equivalent noise level
L <sub>eq</sub> dBA	— weighted average noise levels
LC	— Las Campanas
MCL	— Maximum Contaminant Level



MCLG — Maximum Contaminant Level Goals  
 mgd — million gallons per day  
 mg/L — milligrams per liter  
 mm — millimeter  
 MRC — Municipal Recreation Complex  
 MRGCD — Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District  
 msl — mean sea level  
 NAAQS — National Ambient Air Quality Standards  
 NAWQA — National Water Quality Assessment  
 NEPA — National Environmental Policy Act  
 NHPA — National Historic Preservation Act  
 NMDGF — New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
 NMED — New Mexico Environment Department  
 NMFRO — New Mexico Fisheries Resource Office  
 NMNHP — New Mexico Natural Heritage Program  
 NO<sub>2</sub> — nitrogen dioxide  
 NOI — Notice of Intent  
 NPDES — National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System  
 NRHP — National Register of Historic Places  
 NTU — Nephelometric Turbidity Unit  
 O<sub>3</sub> — ozone  
 O&M — operation and maintenance  
 OHV — off-highway-vehicle  
 OSE — Office of State Engineer  
 Pb — lead  
 PL — Public Law  
 PM — particulate matter  
 PNM — Public Service Company of New Mexico  
 PUC — Public Utilities Committee  
 RMP — Taos Resource Management Plan, 1998  
 ROS — Recreation Opportunity Spectrum  
 ROW — right-of-way  
 RWP — raw water pipeline  
 SF — Sediment Facility  
 SHPO — State Historic Preservation Officer  
 SMS — Scenery Management System  
 SO<sub>2</sub> — sulfur dioxide  
 SPNM — Semi-Private Non-Motorized  
 SWPPP — Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan  
 SWRP — Southside Water Reclamation Plant

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TCP — traditional cultural properties  
TDS — total dissolved solids  
TSS — total suspended solids  
TWP — treated water pipeline  
USACE — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
USGS — U.S. Geological Survey  
VMS — Visual Management System  
VQO — Visual Quality Objectives  
VRM — Visual Resource Management  
WTP — water treatment plant  
WWTP — wastewater treatment plant  
YR — year

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This environmental impact statement (EIS) documents an analysis of the effects of a proposal to divert water from the Rio Grande to meet certain near-term water supply needs. The analysis has been conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The proposed Buckman Water Diversion Project (Buckman Project) is designed to address the immediate need for a sustainable means of accessing water supplies for the applicants, the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico (City), Santa Fe County (County), and Las Campanas Limited Partnership (Las Campanas). Most of the water to be diverted would be derived from the San Juan-Chama Project, which is a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) inter-basin water transfer project that supplies water from the greater Colorado River basin to the Rio Grande basin through a tunnel system. The remainder would be native water rights owned by the parties and diverted from the Rio Grande. The project would be located in large part on lands administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (FS) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) who are serving as co-lead agencies for this EIS. Reclamation and the City and County are serving as cooperating agencies.

## Location

The proposed point of diversion is located on the east bank of the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, near the historic Buckman townsite. The proposed diversion site is about 15 miles northwest of the City of Santa Fe. It is located about 3 miles downstream from where Route 4 crosses the Rio Grande at the Otowi Bridge, which is where streamflow data have been recorded by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for more than a century. In addition to the diversion, the project would involve treatment and conveyance of water through pipelines that would generally follow roads and existing utility corridors. Water would be conveyed through these proposed pipelines to Las Campanas as well as the City and County.

## Purpose and Need

As demonstrated by drought conditions in 1996, 2000, and 2002, continuing water shortages in the City and County resulted in a critical and immediate need for water. To meet this need, the applicants are seeking sustainable means of accessing surface water supplies that would use the applicants' water rights by diverting San Juan-Chama Project water and native Rio Grande water while reducing their reliance on over-taxed ground water resources.

The Buckman Well Field, a group of ground water wells located near the river in the vicinity of the Buckman site, is currently being used to access existing water rights in order to provide water to the City and County water service areas and Las Campanas. However, the well field cannot provide a reliable and sustainable source of water. Well yields have been reduced; hydraulic heads in the confined ground water aquifer near the well field have undergone substantial declines; and depletions of nearby streams could cause limitations to pumping. At current well production levels, undesirable consequences to ground water levels and continued depletion of nearby streams are expected to occur unless an alternate reliable water supply is found.

In addition to ground water concerns, storage levels in the City's two surface water reservoirs located on the Santa Fe River, a tributary of the Rio Grande, fluctuate widely depending on seasonal and annual runoff conditions and potable water demand. These reservoirs receive surface water runoff from the Santa Fe Canyon watershed above the City. Overall Santa Fe River

reservoir capacities cannot provide the necessary dependability to provide the water quantities needed to sustain the Santa Fe region during drought conditions.

## **Overview of Proposed Project**

The proposal would allow the construction and operation of the Buckman Project on public lands managed by the FS and BLM, and Santa Fe County. The City and County and Las Campanas have each submitted permit applications requesting the use of these lands for this water diversion project. The Buckman Project would involve the diversion of San Juan-Chama water, which is released from storage in upstream reservoirs, and native Rio Grande water. The Buckman Project is proposed to be designed and constructed with the capacity necessary to meet the County's near-term needs for water through the year 2010, the City's near-term needs for water through 2015, and Las Campanas' needs through community build out, based on various physical, technical, and environmental limitations.

## **Decision Framework**

The analyses presented in this document, coupled with public, agency, and tribal comments received following its release as a public draft EIS, will provide the basis for decisions by the joint lead agencies. The forest supervisor for the Santa Fe National Forest and the Taos Field Office manager for BLM will decide to authorize or not authorize implementation of the project on lands under their stewardship. The Forest Service will make decisions about facilities on Forest Service administered lands, including the diversion structure and the sediment handling facility. The BLM will make decisions about certain pipeline routes and power upgrade locations. Decisions about pipelines and other features that will involve both the Forest Service and BLM will be made jointly. A decision other than the No Action Alternative would include approval to proceed with implementation of the Proposed Action or the incorporation of alternative features that include sediment handling alternatives, pipeline routing alternatives, and a power upgrade alternative. Any alternative could include mitigation and monitoring measures.

## **Public and Agency Involvement**

The lead agencies and applicants have initiated and facilitated an open and collaborative process for agency and public involvement. The process included formal public scoping and a variety of formal and informal channels of communication. Regular coordination with affected or interested agencies and applicants will also be part of the process. Following publication of the draft EIS, hearings will be held to allow agencies, organizations, and the public to comment on the draft EIS.

Meetings have been held with representatives of various agencies and special interest groups. The lead agencies welcome cooperation with other agencies and organizations and are willing to consider scheduling additional meetings upon request. In addition, in accordance with the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the revised 36 CFR 800 regulations of Section 106, Executive Order 13084, and Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, tribal consultation occurs early and throughout the NEPA process through tribal consultation letters initiated on August 5, 2002. Follow-up consultation will be scheduled with any tribal organizations that express interest in the project. In addition, the tribal consultation process will continue through the public review phase following distribution of the draft EIS.

The formal public scoping process was implemented with the July 22, 2002, “Federal Register” publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an EIS. The NOI was an invitation to interested parties to submit suggestions on the scope of the analysis. The NOI also provided information on how to participate and contribute to the final decision regarding the proposed project and alternatives. In addition, the project was posted on the Schedule of Proposed Actions on the Forest Service Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/>.

The scoping process included internal scoping of issues amongst the lead agencies, applicants, and other affected agencies, as well as public scoping. The lead agencies formally solicited comments from the public on August 20, 2002 and August 29, 2002, at public scoping meetings held at the Sweeney Convention Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Following the scoping meetings, a tour of the project area was organized by the lead agencies. Any interested parties, including representatives of other agencies, organizations, or the public were invited to participate. The tour was conducted on October 16, 2002. The formal public scoping process was concluded on September 5, 2002, with the exception of comments received during the tour.

One hundred and thirty-seven public scoping comments were received. The majority of comments were in 6 categories each having 10 or more comments. These categories were: water resources; purpose and need for the proposed action; infrastructure; biological resources; cumulative impacts of the proposed action; and alternatives to the proposed action.

## Issues

Issues are defined as concerns of the potential effects from the proposed project. The lead agencies’ interdisciplinary team, along with interested agencies and the public, identified issues for this project during the scoping process. The collaborative scoping process was also used to identify which issues should be emphasized or de-emphasized in order to narrow the scope of the EIS in accordance with NEPA regulations. Issues are considered to be key issues if there is a potential that the impacts of a proposal cannot be avoided by applying standard mitigation measures.

The following key issues receive the primary focus of attention in this document:

- **Land Tenure and Use** – The project would require new facilities and pipeline corridors to be constructed and operated on Federal lands managed by the BLM and FS. Construction of pipelines on Las Campanas land could have some temporary effects of property and traffic within the community. In addition, some BLM and FS lands would be dedicated for use by the City, County, and Las Campanas, thus unavailable for other public activities. Another aspect of this issue are Indian Trust Assets (ITAs), which are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribe’s or individuals.
- **Water Resources** – The project would have some effects on water flows in the Rio Grande; there would also likely be a beneficial effect on local ground water tables in the area, in that the new facilities would reduce reliance on wells for local water supplies.
- **Biological Resources** – The project would result in some loss of habitat due to construction and operation of facilities. Potential effect on fish and aquatic habitats below the proposed project site due to effects on water flow are very minimal. No adverse effects to special interest or protected species are expected including possible

consequences to the Rio Grande silvery minnow (*Hybognathus amarus*), a species listed under the Endangered Species Act as endangered.

- **Cultural Resources** – Construction of project facilities could have some effect on the historic, prehistoric, or Native American resources in the affected area. In particular, the site of the historic Town of Buckman, which has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, could be affected by the Proposed Action.
- **Scenic Resources** – The project would have some effect on the scenic resources within the proposed project area. The water diversion structure and associated infrastructure would be partially visible from the White Rock Overlook. In other project areas, the water diversion infrastructure would be visible from roadways and selected viewpoints. In addition, improvements to Buckman Road would result in moderate visual contrasts with the existing landscape characteristics from curve straightening, dip sections, and gravel surfacing.

Other issues include air quality, environmental justice, geology and soils, noise, recreation and traffic, and socioeconomics.

## Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Study

Many alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed study because they would not meet the stated purpose and immediate near-term need for a sustainable means of accessing water supplies for the applicants. Coupled with the need for surface water access through diversion of San Juan-Chama Project water and native Rio Grande water is the requirement to reduce reliance on over-taxed ground water resources. Additionally, it should be noted that this proposed project has an independent utility from the City and County's long-term water management strategy, which could consider different water diversion locations and other water management options. Alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis are briefly summarized below.

- **Additional Ground Water Pumping** – Additional ground water pumping was considered, however, it would not meet the purpose and need for the project. During drought conditions, and concurrent with depleted storage levels in the McClure and Nichols Reservoirs, the Buckman Well Field could not be relied upon to provide a sustainable water supply. Therefore, additional ground water pumping does not meet the purpose and need for the project.
- **Other Surface Water Diversions** – Other surface diversion sites were considered, however, primarily because of time considerations, they would not meet the purpose and need for the project, which includes a critical and immediate need for increased water supplies. The applicants conducted numerous studies of water diversion alternative locations. Site selection criteria included consideration of time required to implement, engineering feasibility, minimizing the need for new facilities, use of existing rights-of-way (ROWs), and economics. Using these selection criteria, only one of five sites—Buckman—passed the screening process. The four other potential sites initially considered did not meet the schedule requirements, and each had problems meeting one or more of the other selection criteria.
- **Water Conservation** – Water conservation measures have been implemented to combat drought conditions, but it was determined that water conservation measures alone would not meet the purpose and need for the project. Water conservation is a necessary component of overall water management. Formal water conservation plans are already

required for the continued use of water rights and for future water rights applications to the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer. The Federal government also requires a water conservation plan for all water contracted under a Federal program e.g., San Juan-Chama waters. Conservation measures are already an integral part of a water management strategy and during times of water supply shortages, additional water supplies would still be necessary. Therefore, this alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the proposed project.

- **Alternative Technologies** – Several alternative technologies were considered but disregarded because they did not meet the needs of the individual applicants. Many possible configurations exist that were not evaluated in detail. Examples include an alternative configured with one water treatment plant to serve both the City/County needs as well as the potable water requirements of Las Campanas; various pipeline configurations; and pumping river water directly to the water treatment facilities without sediment removal. These alternatives were not considered in detail but disregarded because they do not meet the needs of the individual applicants, or because they offer a variation of an alternative considered in detail without responding to a substantial issue.

## Alternatives Considered, Including the Proposed Action

**No Action Alternative.** The No Action Alternative would mean that the Buckman Project would not be permitted. The Buckman Well Field would continue to be used to access existing water rights and to provide water to the City/County water service areas and the Las Campanas community. However, the well field would not provide a reliable and sustainable source of water due to declining well yields, substantial reductions in ground water levels near the well field, and potential limitations to pumping due to depletion of nearby streams. Other means of achieving the goal of accessing the surface water would likely be pursued. The applicants would continue to develop long-term water management strategies. However, the planning horizon on these efforts is about 10 years and it is not likely that these long-term strategies would be useful in addressing the near-term drought protection needs.

**Elements Common to All Action Alternatives.** The Proposed Action would include many elements that are common to all action alternatives. Improvements to Buckman Road and the locations of most major facilities associated with the Proposed Action would be common to all action alternatives. Project elements where differences occur are in the sediment removal facilities, some pipeline routings and power upgrades. A sediment facility associated with the Proposed Action and two alternative sediment facilities are being considered. In addition, a raw water pipeline and several treated water pipeline routes are being considered as is a power upgrade alternative. In the discussions of the alternatives that follow the Proposed Action description, the related features of the Proposed Action are first described as a basis for comparison.

**Proposed Action.** The facilities necessary to implement the Proposed Action include a diversion structure on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande, sediment separation facilities, booster stations, storage and treatment facilities, water conveyance pipelines, Buckman Road improvements, and power upgrades. The locations of facilities associated with the Proposed Action and other alternatives are illustrated on Figure 1. The raw water pipelines from the point of diversion would be located within existing utility easements that parallel or use Buckman Road on BLM lands, with smaller segments on FS, County, State, and private lands. From Buckman Road, within BLM lands, the City and County raw water pipeline would branch off in a southerly direction

utilizing approximately 4 miles of existing ROWs that are adjacent to unimproved maintenance roadways. The City and County pipeline would terminate at a proposed water treatment plant adjacent to Caja del Rio Road. The Las Campanas raw water pipeline would proceed southeasterly, approximately 5 miles within an existing ROW to its terminus at Las Campanas. Road improvements along Buckman Road would be necessary to provide for the safe operation of construction and project vehicles. Buckman Road is a hard packed dirt road with numerous ruts and limited line of sight in some areas. Roadway improvements would consist of adding a gravel base, construction of roadside drainage ditches, roadway straightening in areas with limited line of sight, and the construction of low water crossings at some streambed locations.

Two new water treatment plants would be required, where the raw water would be processed to safe drinking water standards. The Las Campanas treatment plant would be located on Las Campanas land and operated by Las Campanas. The City and County treatment plant would be located on BLM land leased to the City, just west of Caja del Rio Road. New treated water pipelines would be installed from the treatment plants to convey water into the existing Las Campanas and City and County water distribution systems.

Estimated water diversion quantities used for analysis in this document are based on annual demand projections that extend to the year 2010 County, and 2015 for the City, while the demand for Las Campanas is projected through community build out (1,717 homes). These projections translate to approximately 8,730 acre-feet per year (ac-ft/yr), currently estimated to be 5,230 ac-ft/yr for the City; 1,700 ac-ft/yr for the County; and 1,800 ac-ft/yr for Las Campanas. The proposed diversion facility is sized for a combined net peak diversion of approximately 28.2 cubic feet per second (cfs), which meets the combined peak needs of the City, County, and Las Campanas.

**Sediment Facility Alternatives.** The sediment facility location for the Proposed Action would be in close proximity to the Rio Grande and constructed on the historic Buckman townsite. This area is within the viewshed of the river and riverside visitors, and is readily visible from the observation platform in White Rock Overlook Park. Construction and operation would occur on the historic Buckman townsite. Several alternatives were developed in response to these viewshed and cultural resource issues. All alternatives would involve mechanical (vortex) separators to remove the sand particles greater than 0.1-mm from the diverted river water.

- **Sediment Facility Alternative SF1** – For this alternative the facilities would be the same as for the Proposed Action, but the location would be different. In order to minimize effects to the viewshed and the Buckman townsite, Sediment Facility Alternative SF1 was developed. This alternative would move the sedimentation facility southeast of the proposed location and generally out of sight from area visitors and observers at White Rock Overlook Park. The location would be entirely off the Buckman townsite.
- **Sediment Facility Alternative SF2** – Sediment Facility Alternative SF2 was developed as a contingency plan should EPA not issue a sediment return discharge permit under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. This alternative would require trucking out sediment for disposal at the Caja del Rio Landfill.

Under this alternative there would be no sediment return line from the Rio Grande Sediment Facility to the Rio Grande. The sand would be discharged to lined ponds for storage and drying. Based on estimated sediment loading of the material coarser than 0.1 mm, plus an additional 5 percent entrapment of smaller sediments, two lined ponds would be required. Each pond would



be about 75 feet by 150 feet by 8 feet deep. One pond would be in operation, receiving sand from the vortex separators, while the other would be used for storage and drying. Dried sand would be removed and transported by truck approximately 20 miles for disposal at the Caja del Rio Landfill.

**Pipeline Alternatives.** Alternatives are being considered for two segments of the Proposed Action pipelines. For the Proposed Action, two raw water pipelines are being considered between the river and the second booster station, one for conveying water to Las Campanas and the other for conveying water to the City and County. A single pipeline is being considered as an alternative. In addition, three alternatives are being considered for the 18,113-foot treated water pipeline that would run from the proposed City/County water treatment plant (WTP) at the Municipal Recreation Complex (MRC) to existing Booster Station 3.

- **Raw Water Pipeline Alternative** – This alternative would involve substituting a single pipeline for a double pipeline from the booster station near the river up to the next proposed booster station, located near Dead Dog Stock Well along Buckman Road. This alternative is being considered for reasons that include reduced disturbance of two cultural sites in the utility ROW, less cost, and reduced ground and habitat disturbance associated with construction.
- **Treated Water Pipeline Alternatives** – Three treated water pipeline alternatives are being considered that involve different alignments of the northern water transmission line for treated water between the proposed City/County WTP at the MRC and the City’s existing Booster Station 3. These alternatives are being considered for reasons that include minimizing destruction/replacement of the County roadway in Las Campanas, lessening traffic disruptions, and use of a shorter, less costly pipeline alignment, and possibly even affecting property values. Other reasons include reduced commitment of BLM land and the precedent for long-term commitment of some new lands to utility uses.

**Power Upgrade Alternatives.** Preliminary estimates from the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) indicate that power loads associated with the Buckman Project would accelerate the need for planned power upgrades in the area. The power upgrades associated with the Proposed Action include facilities along Buckman Road, the existing Buckman transformer substation, located across from Booster Station 2, and a new 12.47 kV underground power line within a utility corridor between Booster Stations 2/2A and the river. In addition, the Proposed Action includes a new substation that would be constructed adjacent to the proposed MRC WTP. A new above ground 115 kV power line segment less than one-half mile in length would be required to connect the new substation to existing 115 kV above ground lines in the area. The final color of any new substation would require approval from the BLM.

- **Power Upgrade Alternatives AGP1a and AGP1b** – Alternative AGP1 would involve two primary differences from the Proposed Action. Under Alternative AGP1a, a new substation would be located under or adjacent to the existing 115 kV line which currently crosses Caja Del Rio Road. A new underground 12.47 kV (4 wires for each circuit) line approximately 200 to 400 feet long would run east from the new substation and connect to the existing underground distribution system that runs along Caja Del Rio Road. A second new underground line would run west from the existing distribution system within the proposed right-of-way for the access road to the WTP, approximately one-half mile.

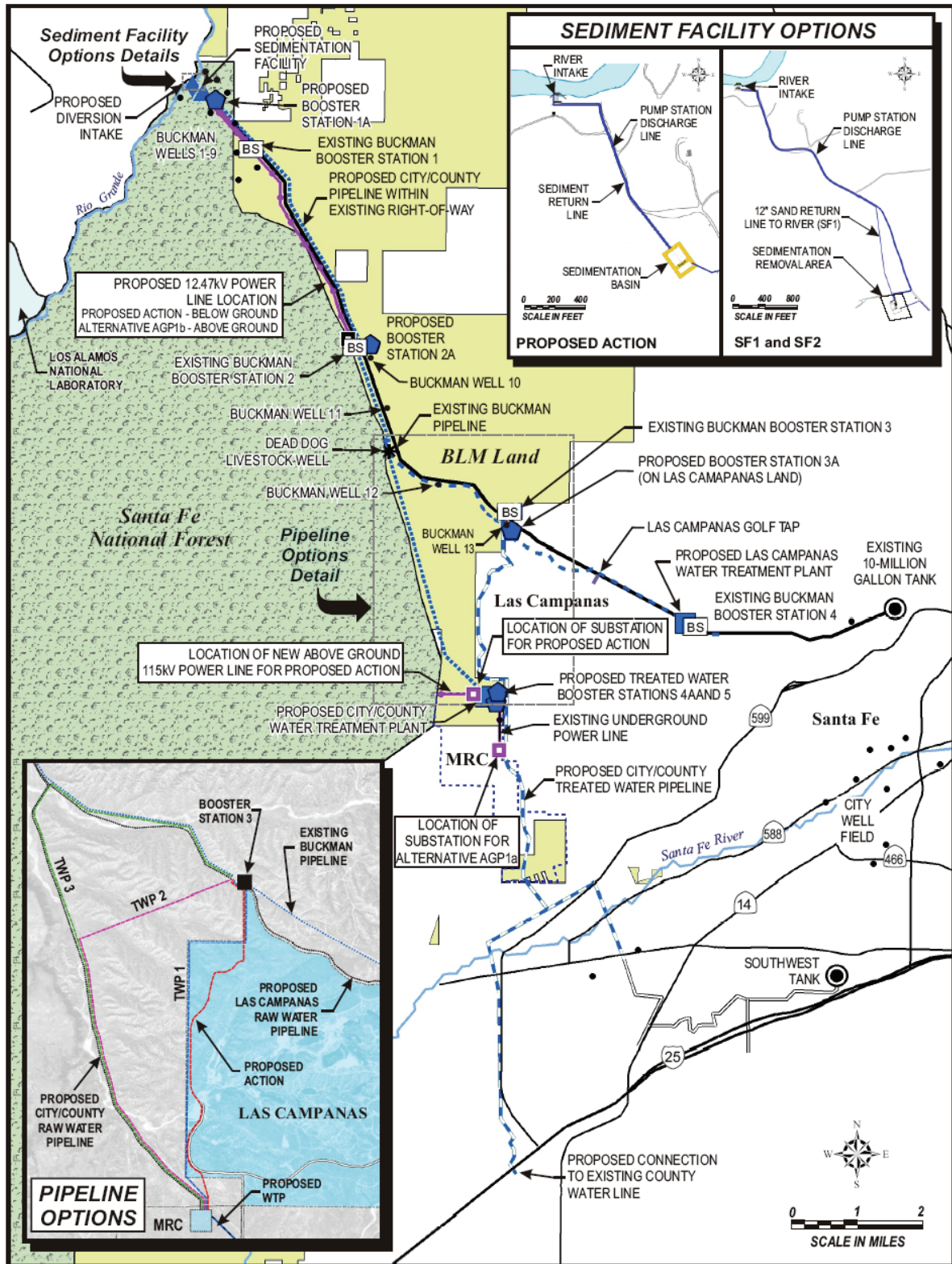


Figure 1. Location of facilities for the Proposed Action and alternatives.

Alternative AGP1b would require an upgrade of the existing Buckman transformer station (as with the Proposed Action). Under Alternative AGP1b, an above ground 12.47 kV power line from the Buckman transformer station, near Booster Station 2/2A, to the river route would be built as an alternative to the buried 12.47 kV line.

As with the Proposed Action, the final color of the upgraded Buckman transformer station and new substation would be approved by BLM.

## Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Requirements

Mitigation measures and monitoring requirements are summarized below. Except where specific alternatives are referenced, these measures would apply to all alternatives, including the Proposed Action. Regardless of which alternative is selected, mitigation would be incorporated into the project to reduce the severity of any potential environmental consequences. Specific details about how these measures would be implemented and who would be responsible for their implementation would be specified in the implementation plan. The implementation plan would be prepared with assistance from government agency personnel following a Record of Decision on the project, if it is decided to proceed with any alternative other than the No Action Alternative.

**Land Tenure and Use.** Based on a potential increase in visitor use to this area resulting from proposed upgrades to Buckman Road, visitor use would be monitored. Prior to construction and after construction is complete, agencies will evaluate the magnitude of increased visitation, and the FS and BLM will take actions to manage visitation as needed to protect the resources and facilities in the area.

**Water Resources.** Placement of a cofferdam in the river for about 5 months during periods of low flow in summer and autumn that would surround and isolate the construction area would serve to mitigate most direct effects on turbidity during construction of the water diversion structure. Design criteria, which would restrict or eliminate withdrawals at or below minimum flow thresholds would mitigate possible reductions to the lowest flows and associated impacts to aquatic habitat. Residual offsets for ground water depletion from past pumping would need to be implemented as mitigation for switching to the surface diversion.

**Biological Resources.** A native plant revegetation and nonnative invasive plant species control program would be required to mitigate the effects of vegetation removed during construction. Placement of a cofferdam in the river that would surround and isolate the construction area would serve to decrease turbidity during construction of the water diversion facility; thus limiting and mitigating the potentially adverse effects to aquatic fauna. A pre-construction survey for special status avian fauna would be conducted at the water diversion site along the Rio Grande, booster station and water treatment locations, and the selected pipeline routes. Depending upon the survey data, a mitigation plan would be developed at that time and specific mitigations, if any, would be based on the survey findings. To ensure long-term revegetation success, a monitoring program would be conducted to assess revegetation success and evaluate recolonization by nonnative invasive plant species. The FS and BLM, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), are developing an operations plan, which will be integrated into the biological opinion, to address mitigation of potential impacts to flora and fauna affected the Proposed Action. The applicants will be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions identified in the biological opinion.

**Cultural Resources.** Effects to cultural resources would be mitigated through implementation of the following practices. Archeological sites would be avoided where possible. Fencing would be placed around sites near the construction area, but not subject to direct affect, to protect them from inadvertent intrusion by construction equipment and personnel. Additionally, a qualified archeological monitor would be present during all construction excavation and surface modifications within known and potential site areas. If previously unknown subsurface cultural deposits are discovered, construction activities in the area would halt and the agency would determine appropriate treatment in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Archeological sites that could not be avoided during construction would have archeological testing or data recovery efforts conducted prior to construction. Subsurface sites discovered during construction activities would also undergo testing or data recovery treatment. Archeological data recovery would be conducted in compliance with a formal data recovery plan approved by the involved agencies and the SHPO. Standard erosion control measures would be in effect during construction activities. All workers conducting construction activities would be educated regarding cultural resources in the project area, appropriate avoidance measures, and associated restrictions per federal statutes. In addition to the measures implemented during the construction phase, interpretive signage that explains the history of the Buckman area, through text and pictures, would be offered to Los Alamos County for placement at the White Rock Overlook Park viewing platform.

**Scenic Resources.** Visual effects would be mitigated through implementation of a number of measures that would be specified in the implementation plan, including: (1) design of structures, selecting color and texture of building surfaces and roofing materials to complement or match the surrounding native soils or vegetation; (2) siting buildings to take advantage of terrain, where feasible, to screen from view; (3) using chain link fences color-bonded to match the predominant natural colors in the area (i.e., brown) and reduce reflectivity of metal; (4) undulating edges of sediment ponds or other measures to break up rectilinear lines that do not match the natural surroundings; (5) coloring concrete in the diversion intake structure and Buckman Road low water crossings to match the surrounding area—for example, using darker tones to blend in better and reflect less light; and (6) using appropriate building materials based on setting for generating traffic signs and posts.

**Soils.** Erosion control measures would be designed in compliance with the requirements for preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Implementation of the SWPPP would mitigate the potential effects of construction activities. These measures would be designed to minimize or avoid the loss of soil, prevent the establishment or exacerbation of rill and gullies, and minimize potential water quality deterioration from sheet erosion that could result from construction and roadway runoff. Trees, one-seeded juniper and piñon pine, that are removed during construction would be mulched and spread throughout the construction disturbance areas to protect and minimize soil loss. The techniques used would consist of mulching and/or a lop and scatter of larger diameter material such as branches and tree trunks to prevent or minimize sheet erosion.

## **Environmental Consequences**

Environmental consequences associated with the alternatives, including the Proposed Action, were evaluated in thirteen resource areas. Environmental consequences as related to the key issue areas are summarized below.

## Direct and Indirect Effects of No Action

The environmental consequences to land tenure and use, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, and scenic resources associated with No Action are discussed below.

**Land Tenure and Use.** There were no effects to land tenure and use identified under the No Action Alternative.

**Water Resources.** The No Action Alternative would result in continued depletion of the aquifer in the Buckman area and the flows of the Rio Grande and its tributaries. The City would continue to be required to offset depletions with releases of San Juan-Chama water into the Rio Grande and by retiring native water rights owned by the City in the two tributaries and the Rio Grande. The No Action Alternative would not affect sediment transport and deposition, water quality, or flooding in the Rio Grande or its tributaries, since flows in the river would not change. However, the near-term demand for water in the region would not be satisfied by the current supply system. The applicants would seek other water rights and other methods for meeting the projected demand. With no action, ITAs related to water rights might be affected by this continued reliance on ground water pumping.

**Biological Resources.** There were no effects to biological resources identified under the No Action Alternative.

**Cultural Resources.** There were no effects to cultural resources identified under the No Action Alternative.

**Scenic Resources.** There were no effects to scenic resources identified under the No Action Alternative.

## Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action

The environmental consequences to land tenure and use, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, and recreation and scenic resources associated with the Proposed Action are discussed below.

**Land Tenure and Use.** Fifty-nine acres would be permanently affected due to the improvements to Buckman Road, construction of the diversion structure, sediment facility booster stations, water treatment plants, and associated infrastructure. Special use and ROW permits would need to be issued. The construction and operation of the proposed new PNM substation near the MRC WTP would remove 2 acres of grazing land from one grazing lease resulting in a slight effect. The nearest tribal lands belonging to San Ildefonso Pueblo are located directly across the Rio Grande from the proposed Buckman diversion structure and sediment facility ponds, and well north of the associated roadway and pipeline corridors. Potential effects on ground water resources related to ITAs would be positive due to decreased reliance upon ground water resources. Furthermore, because the proposed facilities are approved under existing management plans and agreements, and most of the land disturbance would occur along existing utility corridors where current land use is similar to the proposed land use, there would be minimal effects to land tenure and use under the Proposed Action. In addition, development would not occur as a result of the level of improvement measures for Buckman Road.

**Water Resources.** The Proposed Action is not expected to have noticeable effects on surface water resources, either during construction or once it is operational. Generally, with the project in

place, the effect on average flows in the Rio Grande would be less than 1 percent. Of that 1 percent effect, at least two-thirds and likely more would be associated with diversion of water imported to the Rio Grande from the inter-basin San-Juan Chama Project. In addition, the project would have little measurable effect on water quality and essentially no effect on flooding or flood potential. There would be a beneficial effect on water use in the region. The Proposed Action would indirectly affect water rights in that the County would be required to acquire water rights in order to fully use the diversion, and Las Campanas would be required to extend their leased rights. The Proposed Action would result in less reliance on ground water for local water supplies, and would have a beneficial effect on local ground water resources. Ground water models predict that the depressed ground water levels near the Buckman diversion site would rebound over a time period of several decades, possibly as much as 100 feet in some areas. There would be no changes to ground water quality.

**Biological Resources.** The Proposed Action would result in the permanent loss of approximately 59 acres of vegetation. Additionally, modification or clearing of vegetation for facility work area construction boundaries and preparation of the pipeline corridors would temporarily affect an additional 247 acres. For these areas temporarily disturbed, the vegetation would be re-established through the native plant revegetation program.

During site clearing activities and the actual construction event, direct mortality could occur for less mobile species (reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals). No species population would be adversely affected. The 59 acres converted to Buckman Road improvements, facilities, and other infrastructure would be permanently lost as potential predator hunting habitat and foraging or hiding cover for other wildlife species. There would be a concurrent decrease in quality of the habitat immediately adjacent to the facilities due to increased noise levels, traffic, lights, and other human activity. The adjacent habitat also would experience a loss of quality from the reduction in size, segmentation of the habitat, and restriction on mobility for some species. These effects would be minor and no species population would be adversely affected.

During cofferdam construction and demolition, localized increases in turbidity would occur. Aquatic fauna in the area would be temporarily affected during these activities. There could be limited, localized impacts from sediment returned to the river. The very localized impacts to aquatic habitat would have no measurable impact to fish or macroinvertebrate communities in the immediate project area.

A project-specific search of the New Mexico Natural Heritage Program database did not reveal any records of currently listed special status species in the proposed project area. Sixteen special status species were identified that have potential occurrence or habitat within the construction areas. Project construction and operations are not expected to adversely affect any population of a special status species. One species, Rio Grande silvery minnow, while not occurring in the area, could experience an effect from the proposed diversion of native Rio Grande water. However, the Buckman Project's commitment to use native flows during nonpeak times and the design of the Buckman water diversion structure to not allow water diversion at flows 150 cfs or less coupled with the regional mitigation measures would serve to avoid an adverse effect to the silvery minnow population.

**Cultural Resources.** The historic town of Buckman and the Denver and Rio Grande railroad grade would be physically disturbed by the sediment facility, Booster Station 1A, road improvements, raw water pipeline, return flow pipeline, gas pipeline, and power line

construction. Two additional sites would be disturbed by the raw water pipeline and power line south of Buckman. Three sites would be disturbed by the treated water pipeline. The existence of cultural resources within the project area for the above ground power line near the MRC WTP is currently unknown. Construction would have no adverse effect to Indian Trust Assets. However, it is likely that construction impacts to resources could be avoided through careful placement of structures away from any identified resources. Visual and audible effects to the townsite of Buckman would occur. Vandalism, illegal artifact collecting, and inadvertent harm to all sites could occur. The facilities at the Buckman townsite would be visible from San Ildefonso Pueblo lands. There would be no adverse effects to ITAs. Conversely, implementation of the Proposed Action could positively effect ground water resource related ITAs by reducing the reliance on ground water for local water supplies. There has been no response by Indian tribes to requests for consultation regarding the presence of traditional cultural properties and sacred sites in the project area.

**Scenic Resources.** Construction activities would be noticeable by site users and visitors to the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform. These effects would be short term. The water diversion structure and associated infrastructure would be within the foreground view of river users (boaters) and site visitors, and could be seen at a distance from the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform. After vegetation is reestablished, the facility would not be readily apparent to the site visitor or viewshed observers at White Rock Overlook Park. Boaters would be aware of the structure as they proceed past, but due to the design, it would be compatible with the river environment and not introduce a highly discordant element into the riverscape. The Buckman Booster Station 1A and sedimentation facility would be apparent to the casual site user and viewed from White Rock Overlook. However, construction of these facilities at the old townsite of Buckman using historical architecture that is compatible with the landscape character would maintain the historical and cultural context.

Buckman Road improvements, including surfacing with gravel, would increase the reflectivity of the road and introduce a different color element to existing conditions. Buckman road would become even more apparent to the casual viewer. Generally, existing utility corridors and booster station locations would be used which would serve to minimize impacts to the scenic environment. Once plants are re-established, pipeline corridors would blend in with existing conditions. Pump station architecture that blends into the surrounding landscape would serve to minimize the visual effect of additional structures.

The proposed MRC water treatment plant (WTP) would be designed to blend into the surrounding landscape. Thus, it would not be readily evident to a distant viewer after successful vegetation reestablishment. However, the proposed above ground power line to the MRC and the proposed power substation at the MRC would have visual effects. The final color of the substation would be approved by BLM. The level of change to the foreground-middle ground perspective would be moderate due to the extent and prominence of the water treatment facilities, Buckman Road improvements, and associated infrastructure. Effects to scenic resources would be compliant with FS and BLM standards.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

The environmental consequences to land tenure and use, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, and scenic resources associated with the sediment facility alternatives are discussed below.

**Land Tenure and Use.** Alternative SF1 would require a new pipeline corridor for the return flow pipeline. Alternative SF2 would require a greater amount of truck traffic than the Proposed Action.

**Water Resources.** For Alternative SF1, the effects on water resources would be the same as for the Proposed Action. For Alternative SF2, the maximum diversion would be reduced from 32 cfs to 28.2 cfs; however, since there would be no return flow for sand re-injection, the net diversion would still be 28.2 cfs under peak withdrawal conditions. Therefore, the effects on streamflow would be nearly identical to those for the Proposed Action. The effects of sedimentation and water quality would be even less than the minimal effects described for the Proposed Action. Flooding and ground water effects for either sediment facility alternative would be the same as those described for the Proposed Action.

**Biological Resources.** The sediment return line for Alternative SF1 would be longer compared to the Proposed Action resulting in the short-term disturbance of approximately 3 additional acres of plant and animal habitat. Short-term wildlife effects from construction of a return pipeline would be avoided under Alternative SF2. Alternative SF2 would result in episodic and increased truck traffic that could result in short-term wildlife avoidance of the Buckman Road corridor. However, the effects would be negligible and of short duration as wildlife populations would habituate to changes in road traffic. Under Alternative SF2 there would be no return of sediment to the Rio Grande. Thus, the potential effects identified for sediment return consequences under the Proposed Action would not occur. The effects on special status species would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.

**Cultural Resources.** Alternative SF1 would remove the disturbance to the Buckman townsite caused by the Proposed Action's sediment facility and Booster Station 1A. Alternative SF1 would also have less of a visual and audible effect on the Buckman townsite. Alternative SF2 would remove the disturbance to the Buckman townsite caused by the Proposed Action's sediment facility, Booster Station 1A, and the return flow pipeline. Alternative SF2 would have less of a visual and audible effect on Buckman than the Proposed Action, but more of an effect than Alternative SF1 due to the presence of haul trucks nearby.

**Scenic Resources.** Alternatives SF1 and SF2 would place the sediment facility substantially out of the White Rock Overlook viewshed, and the facilities would not be visual to Rio Grande boaters or other visitors to the river front area. Thus, effects to visual resources would be greatly reduced. Alternative SF2 would require trucking out the sediment and require two sediment storage ponds. Drying sediment would be a different color than the surrounding environment and would be noticeable from some higher elevation viewing locations.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Alternatives**

The environmental consequences to land tenure and use, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, and scenic resources associated with the pipeline alternatives are discussed below.

**Land Tenure and Use.** Alternative RWP1 would reduce disturbance of land because only one trench would be dug instead of two. Alternatives TWP1 and TWP2 would require the creation of a new utility corridor for a portion of their lengths. Alternative TWP3, while longer, would use existing utility corridors and have no effect on land tenure and use. In addition, a ROW would be issued for any pipeline crossing agency land.



**Water Resources.** Effects on water resources for all pipeline alternatives would be the same as those discussed for the Proposed Action.

**Biological Resources.** Alternative TWP3 would require approximately 10 acres more than the Proposed Action but would occur in an existing utility corridor. Construction would occur entirely in existing utility line ROWs, thereby avoiding degradation to plant communities and animal habitat. The effects on aquatic communities would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives. The effects on special status species would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.

**Cultural Resources.** Alternative RWP1 would reduce the extent of physical disturbance to Buckman townsite and the railroad grade. Alternative TWP1 would affect one site. Alternative TWP2 would affect no sites. Alternative TWP3 would cross the railroad grade four times.

**Scenic Resources.** Alternative TWP1 would require the construction and operation of the treated water return line in a new utility corridor along BLM and Las Campanas lands. Alternative TWP2 would install the treated water return line back along the Dead Dog well corridor and then cut east in a new utility corridor to Booster Station 3. Alternative TWP3 would use the existing utility corridors to deliver the treated water. Construction and establishment of a new pipeline corridor (Alternatives TWP1 and TWP2) would affect the local viewshed by introducing a straight-line swathe and bare ground. Even with revegetation, the new corridor would be noticeable in the short term until vegetation is re-established. Development of a new corridor could encourage changes to and increased recreation use in the area and subsequent degradation to the natural viewshed.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

The environmental consequences to land tenure and use, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, and scenic resources associated with the power upgrade alternative are discussed below.

**Land Tenure and Use.** The effect on land tenure and use would be the same as for the Proposed Action for Alternative AGP1. No effects to grazing would result from the construction and operation of the new substation along Caja del Rio Road. Approximately 1.8 additional acres (based on a 30-foot-wide corridor) of land would be disturbed for the power line connection between the existing power source and the MRC WTP; however, the power line would be located within an existing ROW and, therefore, would not change land tenure and use.

**Water Resources.** The effects on ground water would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade Alternative AGP1.

**Biological Resources.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrades. Between Booster Station 2/2A and the river, disturbance would be similar to the Proposed Action. Once in place the 12.47 kV overhead lines could provide additional raptor perch sites between Booster Station 2/2A and the river.

**Cultural Resources.** The above ground power line between the Buckman substation and the river would result in physical disturbance of the Buckman townsite, but the extent of disturbance would be greatly reduced from the Proposed Action. Visual effects to the Buckman townsite from the above ground power line would be greater than the upgrade for the Proposed Action.

**Scenic Resources.** Alternative AGP1 would require an upgrade of the existing Buckman transformer station and construction and operation of a new substation approximately 1 mile southeast of the MRC WTP, adjacent to an existing power line along Caja del Rio Road. The substation would be in the viewshed of some houses present along Caja del Rio Road. Under AGP1a an existing buried power line would be used to supply power from the new substation to the MRC WTP. Therefore, transmission lines under AGP1a would not be apparent to visitors and residents along Caja Del Rio Road. Under AGP1b, overhead power lines from the proposed diversion intake site to Booster Station 2A would be apparent to site visitors and introduce a discordant visual element into the landscape.

# Chapter 1 • Purpose of and Need for Action and Background

This environmental impact statement (EIS) documents an analysis of the effects of a proposal to divert water from the Rio Grande to meet certain near-term water supply needs. The analysis has been conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The proposed Buckman Water Diversion Project (Buckman Project) is designed to address the immediate need for a sustainable means of accessing water supplies for the applicants, the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico (City), Santa Fe County (County), and Las Campanas Limited Partnership (Las Campanas). Most of the water to be diverted would be derived from the San Juan-Chama Project, which is a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) inter-basin water transfer project that supplies water from the greater Colorado River basin to the Rio Grande basin through a tunnel system. The remainder would be native water rights owned by the parties and diverted from the Rio Grande. The project would be located in large part on lands administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (FS) and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) who are serving as co-lead agencies for this EIS. Reclamation and the City and County are serving as cooperating agencies.

## Location

The proposed point of diversion is located on the east bank of the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, near the historic Buckman townsite. The proposed diversion site is about 15 miles northwest of the City of Santa Fe (Figure 2). It is located about 3 miles downstream from where Route 4 crosses the Rio Grande at the Otowi Bridge, which is where streamflow data have been recorded by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for more than a century.

In addition to the diversion, the project would involve treatment and conveyance of water through pipelines that would generally follow existing roads and utility corridors. Water would be conveyed through these proposed pipelines to Las Campanas as well as the City and County.

## Purpose and Need

As demonstrated by drought conditions in 1996, 2000, and 2002, continuing water shortages in the City and County resulted in a critical and immediate need for water. To meet this need, the applicants are seeking sustainable means of accessing surface water supplies that would use the applicants' water rights by diverting San Juan-Chama Project water and native Rio Grande water while reducing their reliance on over-taxed ground water resources.

The Buckman Well Field is currently being used to access existing water rights in order to provide water to the City and County water service areas and Las Campanas. However, the well field cannot provide a reliable and sustainable source of water. Well yields have been reduced; ground water levels near the well field have undergone substantial declines; and depletions of nearby streams could cause limitations to pumping. At current well production levels, undesirable consequences to ground water levels and continued depletion of nearby streams are expected to occur unless an alternate reliable water supply is found.

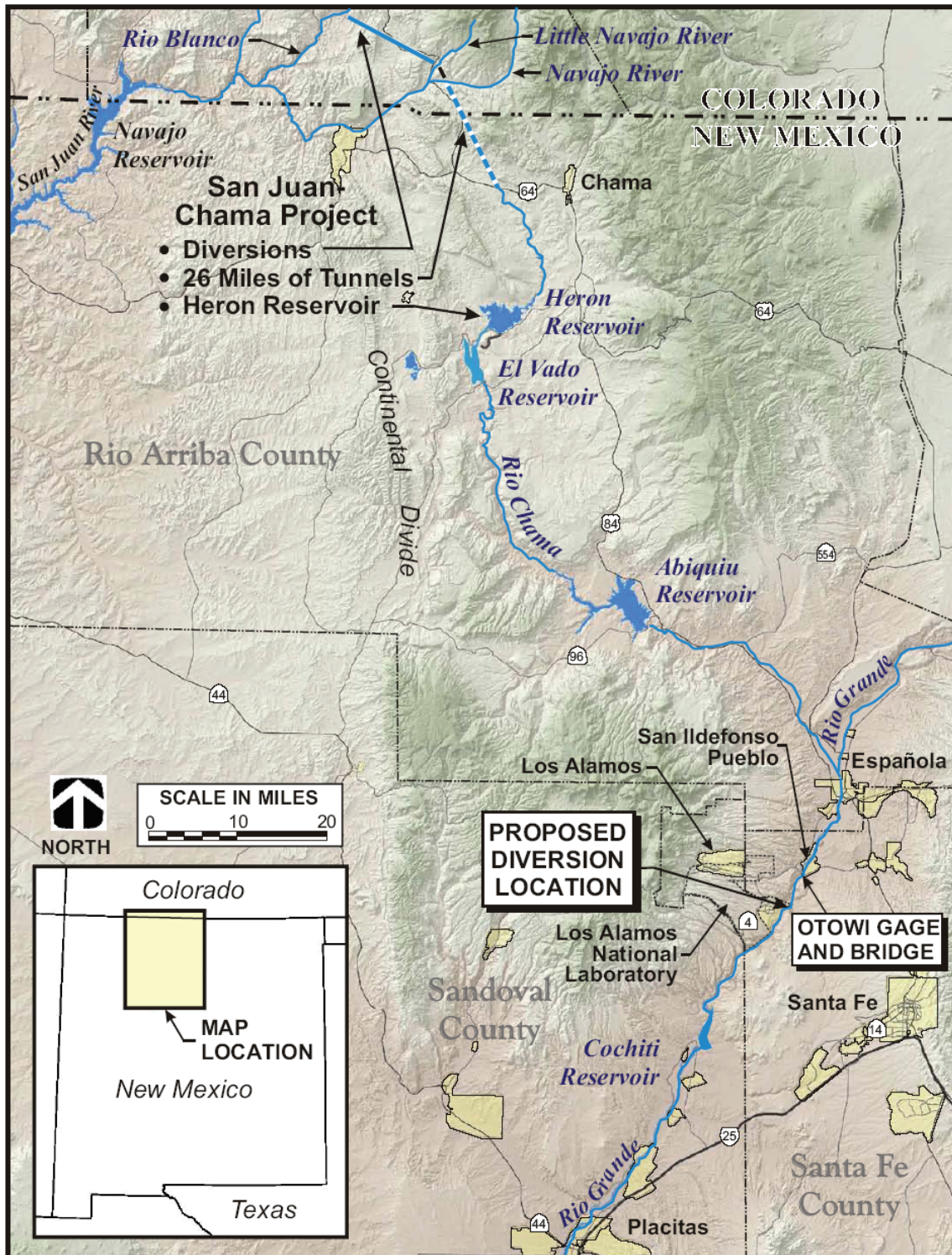


Figure 2. Vicinity map.

In addition to ground water concerns, storage levels in the McClure and Nichols Reservoirs fluctuate widely depending on seasonal and annual runoff conditions and potable water demand. These reservoirs receive surface water runoff from the Santa Fe Canyon watershed above the City. Overall Santa Fe River reservoir capacities cannot provide the necessary dependability to provide the water quantities needed to sustain the Santa Fe region during drought conditions.

Estimated water diversion quantities used for analysis in this document are based on annual demand projections that extend to the year 2010 for the City and County, and to the year 2015 for the City, while the demand for Las Campanas is projected through community build out (1,717 homes). These projections were developed to accommodate future use of the present populations in the City, County and anticipated population of Las Campanas. Through an effective water conservation program, the City has extended the future demands of the present population from 2010 to 2015 or beyond. The demand projections translate to approximately 8,730 acre-feet per year (ac-ft/yr), currently estimated to be 5,230 ac-ft/yr for the City; 1,700 ac-ft/yr for the County; and 1,800 ac-ft/yr for Las Campanas. The proposed diversion facility is sized for a combined net peak diversion of approximately 28.2 cubic feet per second (cfs), which meets the combined peak needs of the City, County, and Las Campanas.

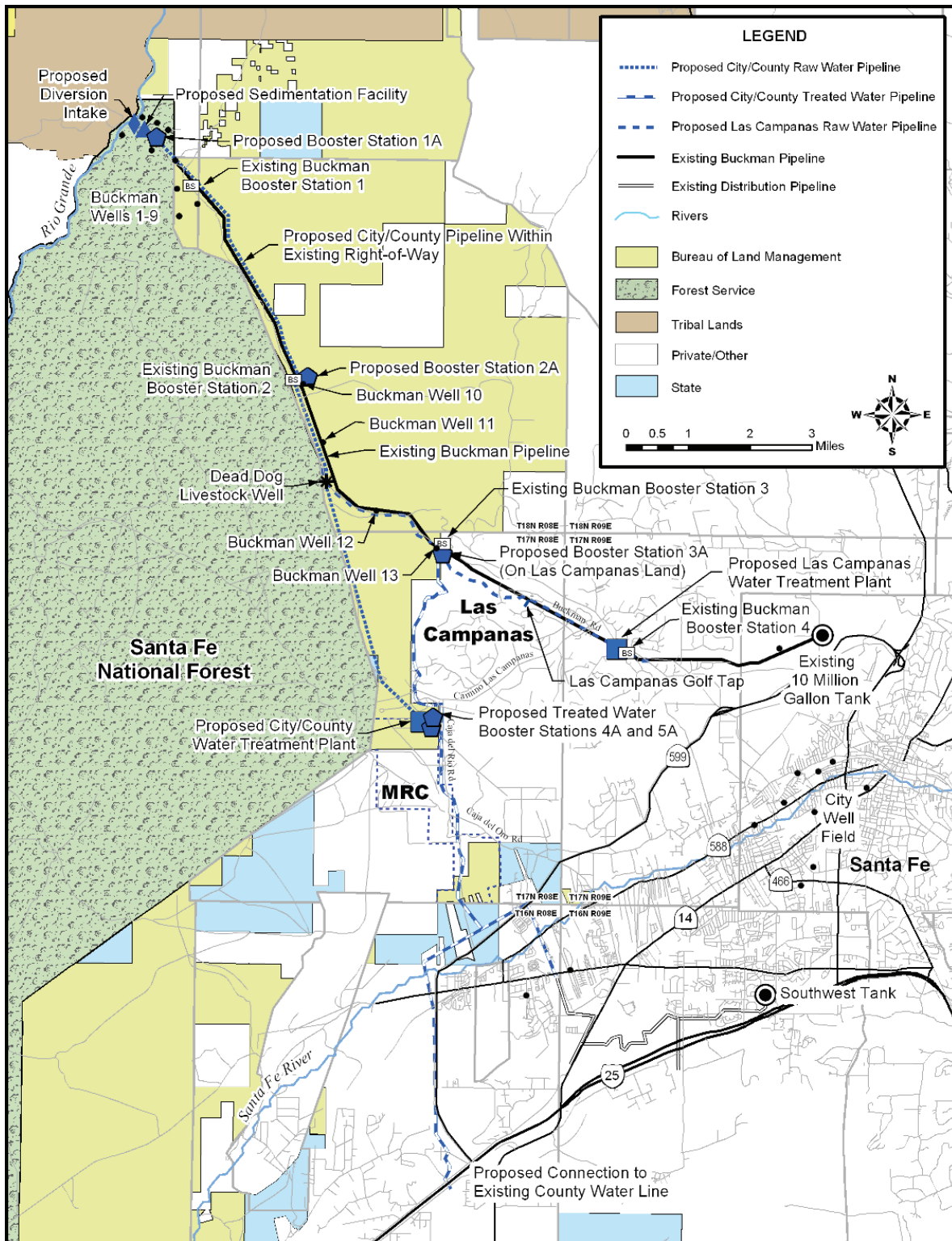
The Buckman Project has an independent utility from the long-term water management strategy of the City and County. While this project could have some additional incidental benefits beyond addressing near-term water shortages exacerbated by drought conditions, it is being proposed because of water shortages created by drought conditions and concerns regarding the reliability and sustainability of the Buckman Well Field. This proposal would not foreclose consideration of any alternatives that might be evaluated in connection with the City and County's longer-term water management strategy. The proposed project is also independent of current emergency efforts by the City to drill four supplemental wells in the Buckman Well Field to provide an immediate emergency water supply in times of drought.

In addition to the need for the water diversion, conveyance and treatment facilities that make up the project, there would be a need for upgrades to Buckman Road and to the existing power supply infrastructure. Buckman Road would be used to service the diversion and other related facilities. It is an unimproved dirt and gravel road that is badly rutted in certain areas. The road would be improved to a more uniform gravel surface with better drainage. The power infrastructure would need to be upgraded to provide adequate power to the pumping stations and treatment facilities that are part of the project.

## **Overview of Proposed Project**

The proposal would allow construction and operation of the Buckman Project on public lands managed by FS, BLM, and Santa Fe County. The City, County and Las Campanas have each submitted permit applications requesting the use of these lands for this water diversion project. A brief overview of the project is provided below; a more complete description is provided in Chapter 2 of this document.

The proposed locations of major facilities are illustrated in Figure 3. The Buckman Project would involve the diversion of San Juan-Chama water, which is released from storage in upstream reservoirs, and native Rio Grande water. The Buckman Project is proposed to be designed and constructed with the capacity necessary to meet the City's and County's near-term needs for water



through the year 2010, and Las Campanas' needs through community build out, based on various physical, technical, and environmental limitations.

The facilities necessary to implement this project include a diversion structure on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande, sediment separation facilities, booster stations, storage and treatment facilities, water conveyance pipelines, extension of a natural gas distribution pipeline, an electrical substation, and power transmission and distribution lines (115 kV and 12.47 kV). The raw water pipelines from the point of diversion would be located within existing utility easements that parallel or use Buckman Road on BLM lands, with smaller segments on FS, County, State, and private lands. From Buckman Road, within BLM lands, the City and County raw water pipeline would branch off in a southerly direction utilizing approximately 4 miles of existing rights-of-way (ROWs) that are adjacent to unimproved maintenance roadways. The City and County pipeline would terminate at a proposed water treatment plant approximately one-quarter mile from Caja del Rio Road. The Las Campanas raw water pipeline would proceed southeasterly, approximately 5 miles within the existing ROW to its terminus at Las Campanas.

Two new water treatment plants would be required for processing the raw water to safe drinking water standards. The Las Campanas treatment plant would be located on Las Campanas land and operated by Las Campanas. The City and County treatment plant would be located on BLM land leased to the City, just west of Caja del Rio Road. New treated water pipelines would be installed from the treatment plants to convey water into the existing Las Campanas and City and County water distribution systems.

## **Decision Framework**

The analyses presented in this document, coupled with public, agency, and tribal comments received following its release as a public draft EIS, will provide the basis for decisions by the joint lead agencies. The forest supervisor for the Santa Fe National Forest and the Taos Field Office manager for BLM will decide to authorize or not authorize implementation of the project on lands under their stewardship. The Forest Service will make decisions about facilities on Forest Service administered lands, including the diversion structure and sediment handling facility. The BLM will make decisions about certain pipeline routes and power upgrade locations. Decisions about pipelines and other features that will involve both Forest Service and BLM administered lands will be made jointly. A decision other than the No Action Alternative would include:

- Approval to proceed with implementation of the Proposed Action or the incorporation of alternative features that include sediment handling alternatives, pipeline routing alternatives, and a power upgrade alternative.
- Mitigation and monitoring measures.

## **Relation to Other Plans Including Land Management Plans**

The Buckman Project would involve construction on lands administered by the FS and BLM. The 1987 Santa Fe National Forest Plan (Forest Plan), as amended, sets forth broad, programmatic management direction for the national forest. BLM's 1988 Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP) specifies approved land uses on BLM lands. This EIS is a project-level analysis, designed to be in conformance with the applicable Forest Plan and RMP management directions, goals, and standards/guidelines.

## **Forest Plan**

The forest-wide goals, standards, and guidelines from the Forest Plan that apply to this project are primarily those regarding protection of cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and water and soil resources, and are hereby incorporated by reference. The project was also designed to conform with the area-specific Forest Plan direction that applies to this management area, Management Area G. Emphasis in this management area is on key wildlife habitat protection, habitat improvement, and forage and firewood production. Contiguous with Management Area G, and in close proximity to the proposed diversion structure, is Management Area L. Management of Area L focuses on maintaining semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation opportunities and providing the user with a moderate to high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans.

Existing land uses in the project area include ranches, timber harvesting for firewood and small wood products, utility corridors and easements, water management (i.e., booster stations, wells, pipelines, drainages and flood control), rangeland/agriculture, and recreation/open space. In addition, the banks of the Rio Grande near the proposed diversion have been used for camping, as well as for activities such as hunting, fishing, picnicking, and swimming. The majority of the Buckman Project facilities would be constructed within existing utility or transportation corridors or easements and would not affect current land uses.

## **Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plan**

The BLM RMP provides a comprehensive framework for managing public lands and allocating resources using the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The RMP establishes areas for limited, restricted, or exclusive uses, levels of production, allowable resource uses, resource condition objectives, program constraints, and general management direction. All uses and activities in the BLM Resource Area must conform to the RMP. The Taos Field Office grants ROWs, leases, and permits to qualified individuals, businesses, and government entities for the use of public lands. Protection of natural and cultural resources is considered in the granting process.

Within the proposed project location, there are no special management areas or areas of critical environmental concern. The “El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Draft Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement” addresses alternatives for the preservation and public use goals for the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (DOE 2002). The trail passes in close proximity to the Buckman Project area, but its preservation and associated public use goals would not be affected by the Proposed Action or its alternatives. The proposed Buckman Project is not in conflict with BLM’s RMP.

## **Other Plans**

The applicants are signatories to a memorandum of understanding with the lead agencies and have agreed to coordinate and work cooperatively regarding land use requirements. The City and County land use requirements are governed by zoning ordinances and each has existing utility ROWs in the project area. The City and County are also working together to develop a strategy to meet the long-term water demands of their constituents. The Buckman Project is designed to meet near-term needs. A separate EIS is planned for a future project that would meet long-term needs.

If approved, the Buckman Project would provide the infrastructure needed to fully meet Las Campanas’ long-term water demands. The proposed infrastructure to be constructed on Las



Campanas land would be compatible with existing zoning ordinances within the community and the specific plan for the Las Campanas development.

## **Tribal Consultation**

In accordance with the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the revised 36 CFR 800 regulations of Section 106, Executive Order 13084, and Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, tribal consultation occurs early and throughout the NEPA process. Tribal consultation letters were mailed in 2002, by the FS to the Pueblo of Jemez, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Laguna, Pueblo of Acoma, Ohkay Owingeh<sup>1</sup>, Pueblo of San Ildefonso, Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Pueblo of Isleta, Pueblo of Taos, Pueblo of Picuris, Pueblo of Sandia, Pueblo of Cochiti, Pueblo of Santa Ana, Pueblo of Tesuque, Pueblo of Nambe, Pueblo of Zia, Pueblo of Pojoaque, Pueblo of Santa Clara, and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. Followup consultation will be scheduled with any of these organizations that express interest in the project. In addition, the tribal consultation process continued through the public review phase following distribution of the draft EIS. For example, in August 2006, a field review was conducted in coordination with members of the Pueblo of Santa Clara.

## **Public Involvement Including Interagency Cooperation**

The lead agencies and applicants have initiated and facilitated an open and collaborative process for agency and public involvement. The process includes formal public scoping and a variety of formal and informal channels of communication. Regular coordination with affected or interested agencies and applicants is also a part of the process. Following publication of the draft EIS, hearings will be held to allow agencies, organizations, and the public to comment on the draft EIS.

## **Coordination with Agencies and Other Organizations**

Meetings have been held with representatives of various agencies and special interest groups such as:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Los Alamos National Laboratory
- U.S. Department of Energy
- Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
- Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club
- Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club
- Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage
- Los Alamos County
- City of Española
- Bandelier National Monument
- State Engineers Office
- Jemez y Sangre Water Planning Council
- Northern Pueblo Tributary Rights Association

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<sup>1</sup> Ohkay Owingeh is formerly the Pueblo of San Juan.

The lead agencies welcome cooperation with other agencies and organizations, and are willing to consider scheduling additional meetings upon request.

### **The Scoping Process**

The formal public scoping process was implemented with the July 22, 2002, “Federal Register” publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS. The NOI was an invitation to interested parties to submit suggestions on the scope of the analysis. The NOI also provided information on how to participate and contribute to the final decision regarding the proposed project and alternatives. In addition, the project was posted on the Schedule of Proposed Actions on the Forest Service Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/>.

The scoping process included internal scoping of issues amongst the lead agencies, applicants, and other affected agencies, as well as public scoping. The lead agencies formally solicited comments from the public on August 20, 2002 and August 29, 2002, at public scoping meetings held at the Sweeney Convention Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Scoping was conducted in compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1501.7) and FS and BLM’s NEPA Handbook to accomplish the following:

- Determine the scope and substantive issues that will be analyzed in depth in the environmental analysis.
- Identify and eliminate from further detailed study issues that are not relevant or substantive or that are covered by prior environmental review.
- Identify and eliminate from detailed study issues that are being evaluated in other environmental reviews.

The scoping process was designed to actively seek and involve the many diverse communities interested or potentially impacted by the Buckman Project. The goal of scoping was to create an open and accessible decisionmaking process resulting in decisions that are technically sound, health and safety conscious, address public values and concerns, and give the public an opportunity to be involved in the decision. Invitations to participate in the public scoping meetings and requests for comments regarding the proposed project were sent to over 500 Federal, tribal, State, and local agencies, organizations, and individuals. Additionally, a public scoping notice was published in the following newspapers: The Albuquerque Journal North; The Santa Fe New Mexican; The Los Alamos Monitor; and the Rio Grande SUN. Two radio stations were utilized to broadcast news of the scoping meetings: KRSN 1490 AM in Los Alamos and KBAC 104.1 in Santa Fe. KRSN 1490 also aired a pre- and post-scoping interview with project personnel.

Following the scoping meetings, a tour of the project area was organized by the lead agencies. Any interested parties, including representatives of other agencies, organizations, or the public were invited to participate. The tour was conducted on October 16, 2002.

The process has included bimonthly Public Utilities Committee (PUC) meetings in Santa Fe. These meetings have been attended by the public, members of special interest groups, and agency personnel. At PUC meetings, strategies for meeting future water needs, including the Buckman Project, have been presented and debated in a public forum. The schedules and agendas for PUC meetings are posted on the City’s Web site.

The formal public scoping process was concluded on September 5, 2002, with the exception of comments received during the tour. However, the lead agencies are encouraging public participation throughout the duration of the EIS process. To this end, a Web site ([http://www.nm.blm.gov/www/tafo/buckman\\_eis/buckman\\_index.html](http://www.nm.blm.gov/www/tafo/buckman_eis/buckman_index.html)) has been established to provide project information.

## Public Scoping Comments

One hundred and thirty-seven public scoping comments were received. The majority of comments were in 6 categories that each received 10 or more comments. These categories were: water resources; purpose and need for the proposed action; infrastructure; biological resources; cumulative impacts of the proposed action; and alternatives to the proposed action.

A few comments received during the scoping process were determined to be outside the scope of the current analysis for the Buckman Project. These comments will receive no further attention in this EIS; however, they may be considered by the City and County in their efforts to develop long-term strategies for meeting future water demands. Long-term strategies could include other surface water diversion projects or ground water projects. The comments considered to be out of scope included a proposal to pipe the water directly to Nichols Reservoir, a proposal to convey water directly from Abiquiu Reservoir, and a proposal for installation of monitoring wells around the wastewater treatment plant to detect contaminants that could have migrated from known hazardous waste sources.

## Issues

Issues are defined as concerns for the potential effects from the proposed project. The lead agencies' interdisciplinary team, along with interested agencies and the public, identified issues for this project during the scoping process. The collaborative scoping process was also used to identify which issues should be emphasized or de-emphasized in order to narrow the scope of the EIS in accordance with NEPA regulations (1500.4[g]). Issues are considered to be key issues if there is a potential that the impacts of a proposal cannot be avoided by applying standard mitigation measures. This section lists the key issues (analyzed in detail in Chapter 3), along with several other issues that are important but of less significance.

The following key issues receive the primary focus of attention in this document:

- **Land Use and Tenure** –The project would require new facilities and pipeline corridors to be constructed and operated on Federal lands managed by the BLM and FS. Construction of pipelines on Las Campanas land could have some temporary effects to property and traffic within the community. In addition, some BLM and FS lands would be dedicated to use by the City, County, and Las Campanas, thus unavailable for other public activities. Another aspect of this issue are Indian Trust Assets (ITAs), which are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individuals.
- **Water Resources** – The project would have some effects on water flows in the Rio Grande; there would also likely be a beneficial effect on local ground water tables in the area in that the new facilities would reduce reliance on wells for local water supplies.
- **Biological Resources** – The project could have some effect on fish and aquatic habitats below the proposed project site due to effects on water flow. In particular, any possible

consequences to the Rio Grande silvery minnow (*Hybognathus amarus*), a species listed under the Endangered Species Act as endangered, need to be addressed.

- **Cultural Resources** – Construction of project facilities could have some effect on the historic, prehistoric, or Native American resources in the affected area. In particular, the site of the historic Buckman townsite, which has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, could be affected by the Proposed Action.
- **Recreation and Scenic Resources** – The project would have some effect on the scenic resources within the proposed project area. The water diversion structure and associated infrastructure would be partially visible from the White Rock overlook. In other project areas, the water diversion infrastructure would be visible from roadways and selected viewpoints. Buckman Road improvements could affect recreational access to the river and project area.

Other issues include:

- **Traffic** – The project would have some effect on traffic. Traffic effects would include short-term increases caused by construction traffic as well as minor longer-term increases during the operations phase. Buckman Road recreation traffic could be affected by road improvements.
- **Air Quality and Noise** – Construction of project facilities would generate increases in ambient noise as well as dust and other emissions to the atmosphere. Operations would cause minor and localized increases in ambient noise levels.
- **Socioeconomics** – Some jobs would be created from construction related and operation and maintenance requirements as a result of the proposed project.

In addition to evaluating these issues, the environmental analysis assesses the potential effects that the proposed project could have on Indian Trust Assets, as well as assessing the potential effects that the proposed project could have on minority and low-income populations. Economic and land use impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives, as well as the No Action Alternative, are considered, as are other social considerations. Both direct and indirect impacts are considered, as are cumulative effects of the Buckman Project with other past and reasonably foreseeable future projects that could affect the area.

## Permits and Agency Approvals Required

Prior to the start of construction of the Buckman Project facilities, several permits and approvals would be obtained. The approvals will include Congressional authorization for any Federal construction funds that could be required. Permits or authorizations that could be required before project implementation could include:

- Consultation and concurrence with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the biological assessment, addressing listed species in accordance with Endangered Species Act regulations and Coordination Act Report approval.
- Consultation and concurrence with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding identification, evaluation, and determination of effect of the project on cultural resources to meet the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

- Consultation and permitting in accordance with the Clean Water Act, which could involve any or all of the following agencies: the New Mexico Environment Department, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A more complete list of Federal, State, and local temporary and permanent permits that could be required is provided in Chapter 2, “Permits Required for Project Implementation” of this document.



## Chapter 2 • Proposed Action and Alternatives

The Proposed Action would involve the construction and operation of the Buckman Project on public lands managed by the FS and BLM in Santa Fe County, New Mexico. The project would include all pumping and pipeline facilities to enhance the water supplies of the three applicants: the City of Santa Fe, the County of Santa Fe and the community of Las Campanas. Alternatives to the Proposed Action include reconfiguration and/or relocation of various pumping facilities and pipelines, as well as a different method for handling sediments that would be entrained by the diversion. The No Action Alternative is described.

### Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Study

Many alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed study because they would not meet the stated purpose and immediate near-term need for a sustainable means of accessing water supplies for the applicants. Coupled with the need for surface water access through diversion of San Juan-Chama Project water and native Rio Grande water is the requirement to reduce reliance on over-taxed ground water resources. Additionally, it should be noted that this proposed project has an independent utility from the City and County's long-term water management strategy, which could consider different water diversion locations and other water management options. Alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis are briefly summarized below.

**Additional Ground Water Pumping.** Additional ground water pumping was considered, however, it would not meet the purpose and need for the project. During drought conditions, and concurrent with depleted storage levels in McClure and Nichols Reservoirs, the Buckman Well Field could not be relied upon to provide a sustainable water supply. Therefore, additional ground water pumping does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

**Other Surface Water Diversions.** Other surface diversion sites were considered; however, primarily because of time considerations, they would not meet the purpose and need for the project, which includes a critical and immediate need for increased water supplies. The applicants conducted numerous studies of water diversion alternative locations. Site selection criteria included consideration of time required to implement, engineering feasibility, minimizing the need for new facilities, use of existing ROWs, and economics. Using these selection criteria, only one of five sites—Buckman—passed the screening process. The four other potential sites initially considered did not meet the schedule requirements and each had problems meeting one or more of the other selection criteria. Other sites considered as possible surface diversion locations are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **San Ildefonso Area** — This site is located on San Ildefonso Pueblo lands, upstream of the Otowi Bridge. The site has an existing water collection demonstration project in place that uses a system of horizontal collector wells. The ability for this site to meet the quantity and quality needs of the applicants is still under analysis. However, 6.5 miles of water pipeline in addition to the pipelines needed for the Proposed Action or its alternatives would be required to convey the water to the Buckman waterline ROW near Buckman Booster Station 2. Construction of the extra water pipeline would require crossing lands administered by the San Ildefonso Pueblo, BLM, State, and private lands. Because of administrative ROWs and environmental (land use, biological, and cultural resource effects) and technical (water quality and supply) considerations, this alternative would not meet the schedule requirements.

- **Caja del Rio Area** — The area considered is an approximately 6-mile stretch of the Rio Grande in White Rock Canyon between the Soda Springs area downstream of Cañada Ancha and the confluence of the Arroyo Montoso with the Rio Grande, upstream of Cochiti Lake. This site was eliminated from detailed study because of site accessibility issues, lack of existing studies supporting the potential yield and water quality, and requirement for a 10-mile-long corridor outside of existing ROWs on BLM and FS lands.
- **Cochiti Lake Area** — This area consists of Cochiti Lake, extending from the dam several miles upstream and terminating near the confluence of the Arroyo Montoso. Approximately 12 miles of water pipeline would be required to tie into the south end of the City's water distribution system. The pipeline route would require new ROWs and, in some areas, require construction in varying and difficult terrain. Depending upon location, the pipeline could cross Pueblo land and/or FS lands, followed by BLM and lands under private ownership. Substantial modifications to the City's water distribution system would also be necessary. Therefore, this alternative was not considered as a viable short-term solution.
- **Peña Blanca Area** — This area includes the reach of the Rio Grande approximately 1 mile southwest of the community of Peña Blanca. Approximately 14 miles of new water pipeline ROW would be required to tie into the City's southern water distribution system. New diversion facilities would have to be located on private lands, and the water pipeline would cross and require new ROWs on FS, BLM, and private lands. Substantial modifications would also be necessary to the City's water distribution system. Therefore, this alternative was not considered as a viable short-term solution.

**Water Conservation.** Water conservation measures have been implemented to combat drought conditions, but it was determined that water conservation measures alone would not meet the purpose and need for the project. Water conservation is a necessary component of overall water management. Formal water conservation plans are already required for the continued use of water rights and for future water rights applications to the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer. The Federal government also requires a water conservation plan for all water contracted under a Federal program, e.g., San Juan-Chama waters. Conservation measures are already an integral part of a water management strategy and during times of water supply shortages; however, additional water supplies would still be necessary. Therefore, this alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the proposed project.

**Alternative Technologies.** Several alternative technologies were considered. Many possible configurations exist that were not evaluated in detail. Examples include an alternative configured with one water treatment plant to serve both City and County needs as well as the potable water requirements of Las Campanas; various pipeline configurations; and pumping river water directly to the water treatment facilities without sediment removal. These alternatives were not considered in detail because they do not meet the needs of the individual applicants, or because they offer a variation of an alternative considered in detail without responding to a substantial issue.

## **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative would mean that the Buckman Project would not be permitted. The Buckman Well Field would continue to be used to access existing water rights and to provide water to the City and County water service areas and the Las Campanas community. However, the well field would not provide a reliable and sustainable source of water due to declining well



yields, substantial reductions in ground water levels near the well field, and potential limitations to pumping due to depletion of nearby streams. Other means of achieving the goal of accessing surface water would likely be pursued. The applicants would continue to develop long-term water management strategies. However, the planning horizon on these efforts is about 10 years and it is not likely that these long-term strategies would be useful in addressing the near-term drought protection needs.

## Proposed Action

The facilities necessary to implement this proposal include a diversion structure on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande; a sediment separation facility; booster stations and pipes to move the water to the vicinity of its use; a natural gas pipeline; power lines (115 kV and 12.47 kV); and two water treatment plants (one located on private land and one located on land leased by the City from BLM) where the raw water would be treated to Safe Drinking Water Act standards. The project would also involve upgrades to some roads in the project area.

## Elements Common to All Alternatives

The Proposed Action would include many elements that are common to all alternatives. The locations of major facilities associated with the Proposed Action are illustrated in Figure 3. These locations also generally apply to the other alternatives, with any deviations noted in the descriptions of the alternatives provided in Chapter 2, “Sediment Separation Facility Alternatives,” “Pipeline Alternatives,” and “Power Upgrade Alternatives.” Project elements where *differences* occur are found in the following features:

- **Sediment Separation Facility** — A sediment separation facility associated with the Proposed Action and two alternative facilities are being considered. The discussion of sediment separation facility alternatives is presented in the section, “Sediment Separation Facility Alternatives” found later in this chapter.
- **Pipelines** — Pipeline routes associated with the Proposed Action are illustrated in Figure 3. Several possible alternative pipeline configurations are discussed and illustrated in the section, “Pipeline Alternatives” found later in this chapter.
- **Power Upgrades** — Power upgrades associated with the Proposed Action would include installation of a new 12.47 kV underground power line that would generally be located within existing utility corridors. An alternative utilizing an above ground 12.47 kV power line is also considered, as discussed in the section, “Power Upgrade Alternatives” found later in this chapter.

The following sections, “Project Construction,” “Project Operation and Maintenance,” and “System Capacity and Flow Volumes” describe how the facilities associated with the Proposed Action would be constructed, operated, and at what capacity, respectively. Except where noted, these descriptions would also apply to the alternatives. Where differences in the alternatives would occur, they are noted and reference is made to the appropriate document section where information on the alternatives can be found. Key resource requirements for the project are summarized in Table 1. Except where indicated by footnotes, the data in Table 1 apply to the Proposed Action and the alternatives.

## Project Construction

In general, the project would involve substantial quantities of concrete, steel, pipe, and soil materials. These items would primarily be delivered from suppliers near Santa Fe but would also be shipped in from other areas of the United States. These materials would be delivered to the project location via trucks.

Most construction activities would begin with clearing the area of vegetation and other obstructions such as large rocks. Where necessary, backhoes or excavators would be used to remove and stockpile soil. The construction contractors would be responsible for dust and sediment control and would likely employ numerous methodologies. It is anticipated that the contractor would use the application of water for dust control and construction of silt fences for sediment control. Further discussion of dust mitigation and other measures that would mitigate environmental consequences is provided later in this chapter.

Access to all construction areas would be controlled with the use of temporary or permanent fencing. The immediate fencing would limit unnecessary disturbance outside the permanent facility boundary and prevent disturbance outside the temporary permit area. In general, trees would be avoided where possible. However, some trees within the project area would be marked for removal and chipping, removal and relocation, or protected and left in place. Tree removal would most likely involve trees in the riparian zone in the 0.4 acre area that would be occupied by the diversion or the surrounding 2 acres that would be temporarily disturbed. A few trees could also be disturbed along the pipeline corridors or at the booster station sites and other areas of disturbance shown in Table 1. Upon completion of construction, the disturbed areas would be revegetated according to approved vegetation plans.

**Diversion Structure.** The diversion structure would be constructed on the southeast bank of the Rio Grande in the location shown on Figure 3. Photographic simulations of the site before and after construction of the diversion are provided in Figures 4 and 5. The length of river shoreline that would be affected would be approximately 40 feet.

A temporary, portable cofferdam would be placed in the streambed near the shore to divert water to the center and west sides of the river. The cofferdam would extend about 20 to 30 feet into the streamflow and would run 60 to 80 feet parallel to the shore. The total area of instream disturbance would be less than 0.1 acre. The cofferdam would be in place for about 5 months during periods of low flow in summer and autumn. With the cofferdam in place, the riverbed near the construction area would be dewatered and dried using surface pumps and well points. The riverbank area at the intake location would then be excavated and the material would be stockpiled. A diagram illustrating how a cofferdam works is provided in Figure 6. A photograph of a typical cofferdam at a different project site is provided in Figure 7. This photograph is not necessarily representative of conditions at the Rio Grande, but is provided to illustrate the visual character of a typical cofferdam.

**Table 1. Buckman project resource requirements.**

Resource Requirements	Diversion Facility	LC Pipelines <sup>a</sup>	City/ County Pipelines <sup>a</sup>	MRC WTP w/ BSs	LC WTP	Sediment Facility <sup>a</sup> w/ BS 1A	Booster Sta 2A	Booster Sta 3A	Buckman Road	Total All Facilities
<b>Surface Area Disturbance (acres)</b>										
<b>Area Permanently Affected</b>										
- Area Occupied by New Facilities	0.4	8.5	0.0	15.0	0.2	0.4	1.0	0.1	22.0	48
- Area Fenced or Converted to Other Uses	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.2	0.0	11
- Total Area of Permanent Disturbance	0.4	8.5	0.0	25.0	0.3	0.4	2.0	0.3	22.0	59
<b>Area of Temporary Disturbance</b>	2.0	28.5	180.0	10.0	0.5	1.0	1.5	0.3	23.0	247
<b>Total Affected Area</b>	2.4	37.0	180.0	35.0	0.8	1.4	3.5	0.5	45.0	306
<b>Temporary Cofferdam (In-Stream)</b>	0.1									
<b>Construction Schedule</b>										
- Duration of Construction (months)	5	9	13	24	10	10	10	10	12	
- Period of Peak Construction (months)	2	4	8	18	6	6	6	4	6	
<b>Work Force</b>										
<b>Construction Phase</b>										
- Average Number of Workers	8 to 10	10 to 12	15 to 20	25	8 to 10	8 to 10	10 to 15	8 to 10	8 to 10	25
- Peak Number of Workers	20	20	30	50	20	20	20	20	20	220
<b>Operations Phase Workforce</b>	0	0	0	15	1	0	0	0	0	16
<b>Construction Resources</b>										
- Concrete (cubic yards)	200	50	1000	27000	500	350	400	100	50	29650
- Steel (tons)	25	6	10	3,000	60	40	60	12	6	3219
- Water use (gallons per day)	1,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	1,000	2,000	1,000	1,000	20,000	56000
<b>Power Requirements</b>										
<b>Construction Phase</b>										
- Average Load (kilowatts)	50	0	10	100	50	50	50	50	0	360
- Peak Load (kilowatts)	250	0	20	500	100	100	100	100	0	1170
<b>Operations Phase</b>										
- Average Load (kilowatts)	470	0	0	1,600	50	850	900	130	0	4,000
- Peak Load (kilowatts)	900	0	0	3,025	100	1,600	1,700	250	0	7,575
<b>Traffic</b>										
<b>Construction Phase</b>										
- Average daily truck trips (trips per day)	3	6	12	5	6	6	3	2	10	53
- Peak daily truck trips (trips per day)	6	12	25	20	12	12	6	4	20	117
- Haul Routes (miles)	20	15	15	15	10	20	15	12	15	
<b>Operations Phase</b>										
- Staff / laborers (trips per day)	0.5	0.1	0	45	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.1	47.8
- Truck Traffic (trips per month)	0.0	0.0	0	134	0.2	0.1	0	0.1	0.1	154
- Haul Routes (miles)	20.0	15.0	0	3.5	10.0	20.0	0	12.0	15.0	

Abbreviations: BS = Booster Stations, LC = Las Campanas, MRC = Municipal Recreation Center, WTP = Water Treatment Plant

<sup>a</sup> Areas of surface disturbance for these facilities will vary slightly for the alternatives.



**Figure 4. Photographic simulation of the project site showing conditions before and after construction of the diversion structure, view from the opposite riverbank.**



**Figure 5. Photographic simulation of the project site showing conditions before and after construction of the diversion structure, view looking downstream.**

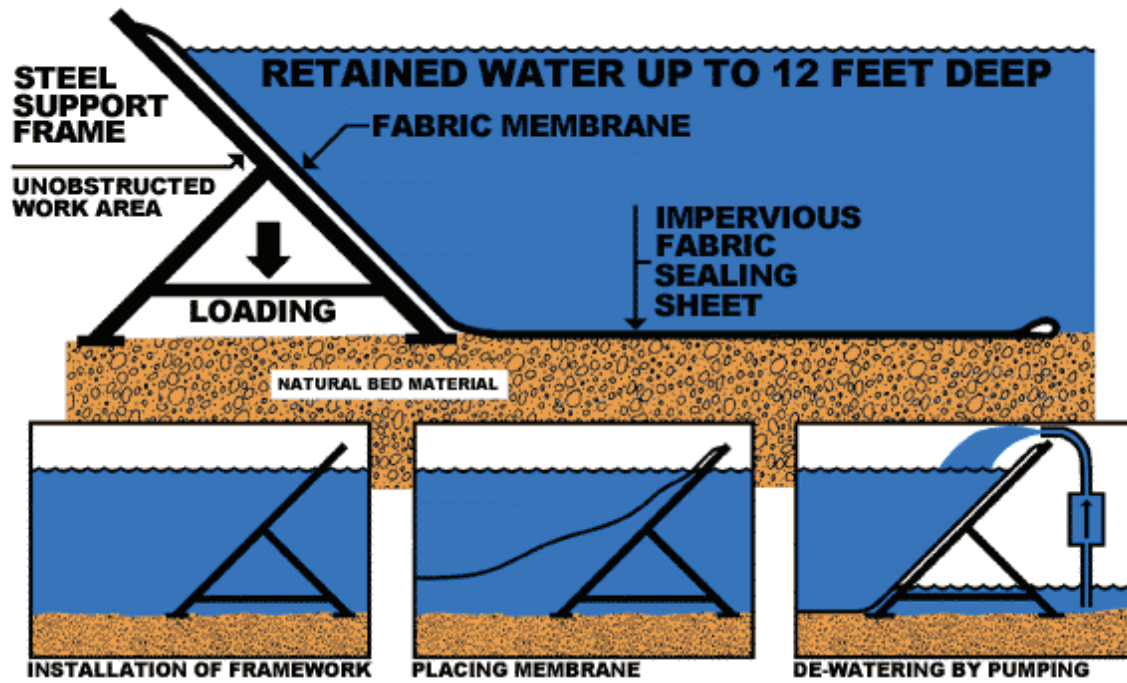


Figure 6. Schematic illustration of how a cofferdam works.



Figure 7. Photograph illustrating how a cofferdam was used on a different project.

Ready-mix concrete trucks would deliver concrete to the site for placement into forms for the structure. After the concrete has set and the formworks removed, the screens would be installed into the diversion structure and the area around the structure would be backfilled with the previously excavated and stockpiled material using backhoes and compaction equipment. Any excess stockpiled materials would be used for fill in other construction locations or disposed of offsite. It is estimated that an area of approximately 2 acres would be temporarily disturbed during construction of the diversion structure and low-head pump station suction lines. Upon completion of the diversion structure construction, the temporary cofferdam would be removed and the riverbed would be restored to pre-construction conditions.

In combination with the diversion structure construction, a low-head pump station, equipment vault, and piping would be constructed. The preliminary designs indicate the low-head pump station would be approximately 240 feet by 120 feet. The low-head pump station would be constructed of reinforced concrete, both below and partially above grade. The area would be excavated, materials stockpiled, and the area dewatered using well points and submersible pumps, as necessary. The concrete structure would be formed and concrete trucks would be used to deliver the concrete to the site. Concrete would be placed into the formwork for the structure. After the concrete work is completed and the forms removed, the area around the structure would be backfilled using previously excavated and stockpiled materials. The underground equipment vault would be constructed of reinforced concrete and concrete masonry units. Mechanical and electrical equipment along with the associated pipes and valves would be installed following completion of the reinforced concrete construction.

**Sediment Separation Equipment.** A 1.4 mile, 20-foot-wide corridor along Buckman Road, with an area of 3.4 acres, would be disturbed for the extension of electric utilities and construction of the pipeline connecting the low-head pump station to the sediment separation equipment located within Booster Station 1A. Of this total area, facilities would occupy about 0.4 acre and the remainder could be reclaimed.

Once operational, the sediment separation equipment would remove sediments from the water that is diverted from the Rio Grande. The finer silt and clay particles could be pumped through the system and removed at one of the water treatment plants. However, about 10 to 20 percent of the sediments would be coarser sand particles that would need to be removed from the water soon after diversion. Under the Proposed Action, these sand particles would be returned to the river along with a portion of the diverted water. The Proposed Action would involve mechanical (vortex) separation of sediments at a facility near the river. There are several possible methods for handling the sand disposition. Two sediment separation facility alternatives are discussed in the section, “Sediment Separation Facility Alternatives” later in this chapter.

**Booster Stations.** A total of five booster stations would be constructed to house pumps and other equipment that would move the water through the piping distribution system. Booster stations would occupy an area of about 2,500 square feet and would look similar to the booster stations that service the existing Buckman Well Field. Booster Stations 1A, 2A and 3A would be similar in appearance. Booster Stations 4A and 5A would be housed together in a single, slightly larger structure. The color and texture of building and roofing material would be selected to blend in as much as possible with the surroundings. Existing Booster Stations 1 through 4 are shown on Figure 3 along with the five proposed new booster stations, which are labeled 1A through 5A. A sketch of a typical booster station is shown in Figure 8. A steel water storage tank would be

located near Booster Station 2A that would likely be similar in appearance to the existing tank at Booster Station 1 (Figure 9).

Booster station sites would be surrounded with a permanent chain link fence. The area to be fenced at each booster station is indicated on Table 1. The fencing would limit unnecessary disturbance outside the permanent facility boundary during construction. An equipment staging and lay down area would be established in the area. All underground construction would be completed first, including installation of utility extensions and pipelines. Once operational, the fenced area would be accessible to maintenance vehicles only.

The ground under the building would be over-excavated, prepared and backfilled to grade with processed materials excavated from the site. Excavation and compaction equipment including backhoes, graders and rollers would be used for moving earth and placement of fill. The pump supports and below grade piping would be installed and backfilled. A reinforced concrete slab would be formed and placed. Ready-mix concrete trucks would deliver the concrete to the site.

After completion of the building slab, concrete masonry units and structural steel support members would be erected for the building structure. The finish work for the building, including roofing, electrical, and mechanical, would then be conducted. Installation of the mechanical equipment (booster pumps) would be accomplished with the use of a crane lifting and placing the pumps inside the building through access hatches in the roof. Final tasks would include the finishing and coating of the building, testing of the equipment, final site grading and placement of gravel surfacing along the roadways, revegetation, and landscaping as necessary.

**Pipelines.** With the Proposed Action, a single pipeline would convey raw water to the sediment removal facility and Booster Station 1A. Two pipelines would convey water to Booster Station 2A, one 36 inches in diameter and the other 16 inches in diameter. Two pipelines are needed to meet the different demands of the City/County and Las Campanas; however a single pipeline alternative from Booster Station 1A to 2A is also being considered as discussed in the section, “Raw Water Pipeline Alternative.” Because of the lower flow for Las Campanas, the smaller pipeline is most efficient for maintaining flow velocities that are sufficient to carry finer sediments that are not removed at the sediment removal facility, but will be removed at the water treatment plant. Several treated water pipeline alternatives are being considered to convey water from the treatment plants to the City, County and Las Campanas distribution systems, as discussed in the section, “Treated Water Pipeline Alternative.”

Initial construction activities for all pipelines would include: permit applications, marking of existing buried utility locations, staking of proposed new pipeline alignment, installation of temporary fencing to control construction access, clearing vegetation within the ROWs, and other tasks necessary based upon environmental studies. Cement mortar lined ductile iron pipe, or other piping material, would be used for this application. The ductile iron pipe would be delivered to the site in 20-foot pipe lengths. The pipe would be stockpiled periodically along the length of the excavation as work progresses. A working width of 20 to 25 feet would be necessary but extra areas would be designated for vehicle access, pipe delivery, work progress, and vehicle turnarounds. The number of vehicle turnarounds would be limited to coincide with existing disturbed areas.

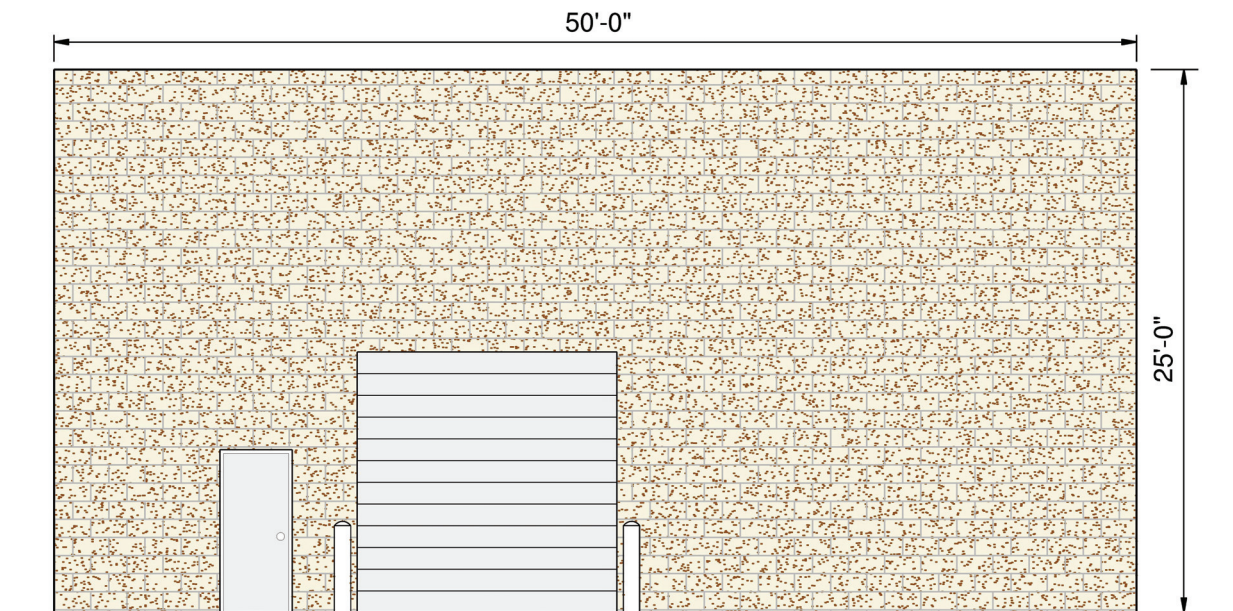
The pipelines would be constructed by open-cut trench methods. It is assumed that the pipelines would be constructed with a minimum of 4 feet of cover below the finished ground surface.



Therefore, a total excavation depth of 8 feet would be required to compact, place pipe bedding, install the pipe and place backfill over the pipe. Depending upon soil conditions, the trench may be sloped or trench boxes used. If the trench is sloped, the total trench would be approximately 17 feet wide, but could vary by soil type for safety reasons.

Heavy machinery would be used to complete the trenching, pipe installation, compaction, and backfill tasks. Completed areas would be graded to surrounding grades and cleaned up to pre-construction condition. The disturbed areas would be revegetated.

Based upon an estimated total trench length for all pipe of 137,000 feet, nearly 200,000 cubic yards of soil would be excavated. The pipe bedding would be 1-foot deep and would require nearly 25,000 cubic yards of fill. Approximately 119,000 cubic yards of the excavated material could be used as pipe cover. Between 50,000 and 81,000 cubic yards of stockpiled soil would not be used as backfill and would either be used elsewhere or disposed of offsite.



**Figure 8. Sketch of typical booster station.**



**Figure 9. Photograph of existing steel water tank at Booster Station 1.**

**City and County Municipal Recreation Complex Water Treatment Plant.** A water treatment plant (WTP) would be constructed at the Santa Fe Municipal Recreation Complex (MRC) (see Figure 3). The plan for the WTP is shown in Figure 10 and conceptual renderings of the WTP facility are shown in Figures 11 through 13. The conceptual renderings represent assumed architectural styles for the facilities and may not be true representations of the actual facilities. The construction of the WTP would require the most time of any facility.

The existing gas line utility corridor access road between Caja del Rio Road and the proposed plant location would be upgraded for use as the MRC WTP access road. The upgrade (widening, road base, and asphalt paving) of the access road would commence immediately to provide a drivable surface for heavy equipment access as well as future solids and chemical truck traffic. The access road would be about one-half mile long and would be upgraded to county code, and the road corridor including drainage ditches would be about 32 feet wide. Substantial underground construction would be required within the treatment plant facility, including installation of construction and permanent utility extensions, process pipelines, and chemical feed lines. Buried and partially buried basins would require extensive excavation.

Buildings and structures would be completed including all mechanical and electrical work. Final tasks would include the finishing and coating of the building and structures, testing of the equipment, final site grading and placement of final gravel and/or asphalt surfacing along the roadways, revegetation, and landscaping. The total area permanently disturbed by construction

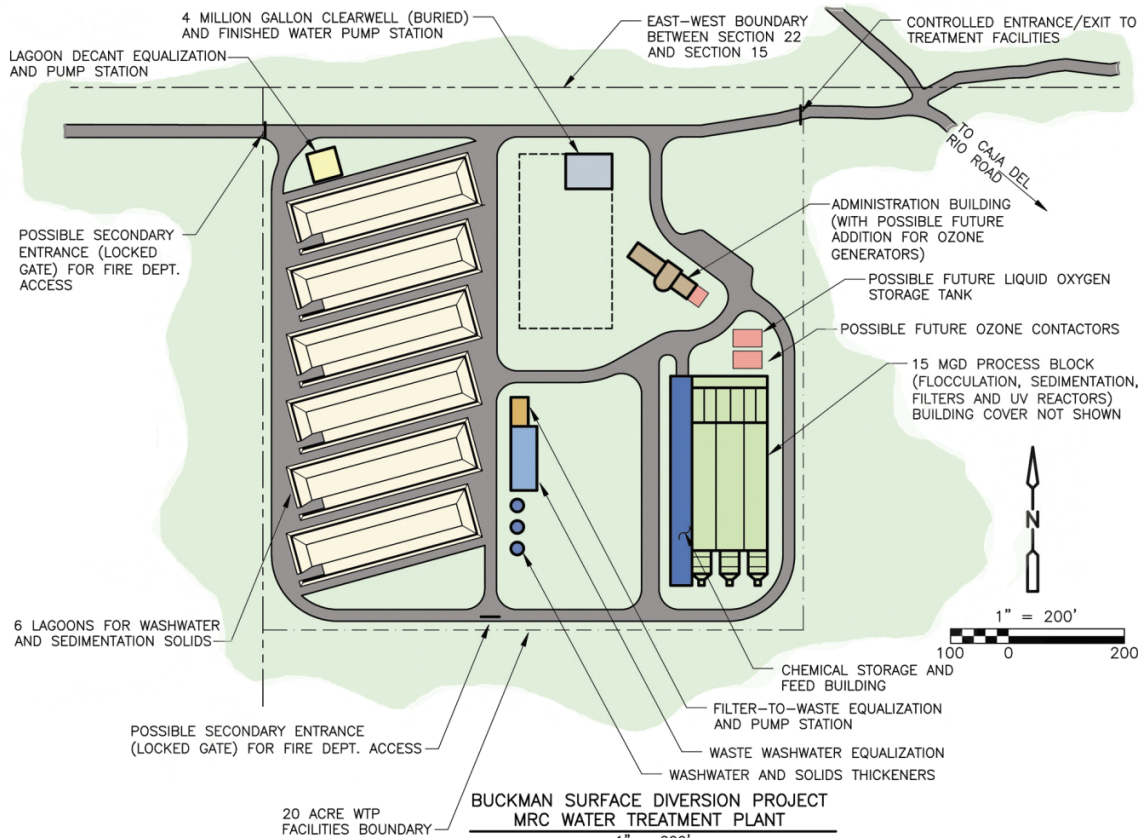
would be approximately 25 acres, 20 acres enclosed within the fenced area for the treatment plant (of which about 10 acres would actually be occupied by new facilities), 2 acres for the access road, and up to 3 acres for utility extensions. About 10 additional acres could be temporarily disturbed and would need to be revegetated.

**Las Campanas WTP.** The Las Campanas plant would be a packaged WTP that would involve only one 8,000-square-foot structure. The building construction would proceed similar to that of the booster station buildings. The total area disturbed during facility construction is approximately 1 acre.

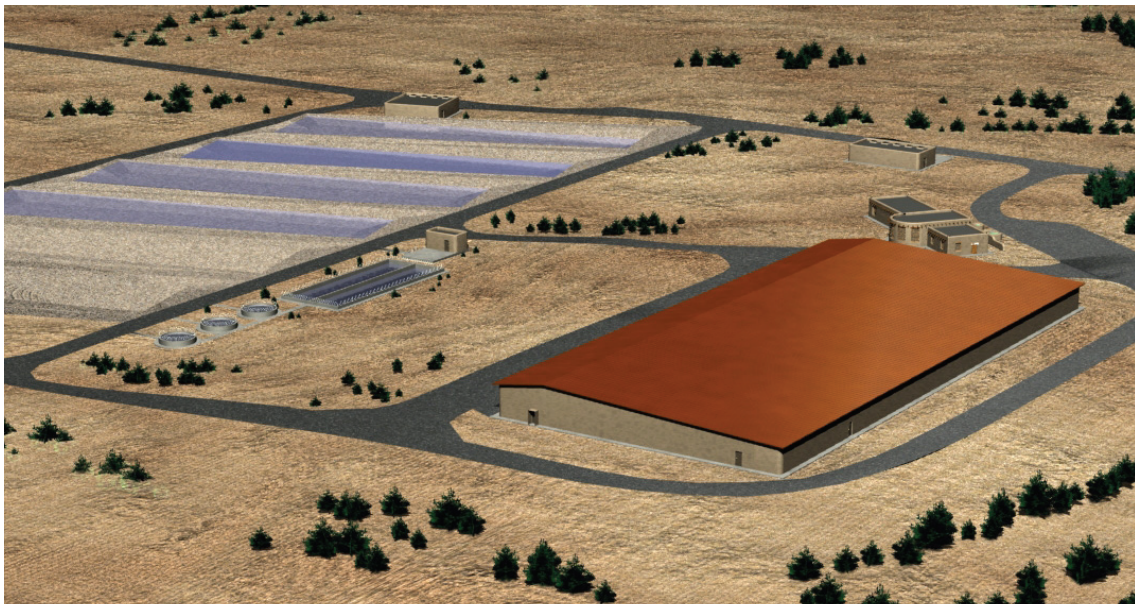
**Buckman Road Upgrade.** The existing Buckman Road or County Road 77, is a two lane, two way, rural dirt road that is badly rutted in places and has hard-pan areas where the gravel has been worn thin. The entire length of the road from NM 599 to the Rio Grande is approximately 15 miles. A portion of the road (~5.8 miles) otherwise known as Camino La Tierra is paved from NM 599 to approximately 1,500 feet southeast of Buckman Well 13 as shown on Figure 14. Any future improvements to this paved section of the road would be done by Las Campanas. A preliminary conceptual road design study was conducted to evaluate the unpaved portion of Buckman Road, a length of a little more than 9.2 miles, and is incorporated by reference (Tierra Lopezgarcia Group 2004). Cost estimates were prepared for four separate road improvement alternatives. These results and review comments from impacted agencies and concerned entities provided the necessary input for the final selection and recommendation of one alternative. The road study report identified this alternative as Alternative D. Existing road conditions were evaluated and curve deficiencies were identified. A computer engineering based program generated a conceptual road design based on the identified curve deficiencies. As a result, a number of estimated road improvements were identified by road segment as shown in Figure 14 (Tierra Lopezgarcia Group 2004).

The objective of the upgrade under the Proposed Action would be to maintain the existing rural nature of the roadway, but provide a more consistent gravel surface. Buckman Road on FS land is a Maintenance Level 2 road and will remain a Maintenance Level 2 road following any proposed improvements. Maintenance Level 2 is assigned to roads open for use by high-clearance vehicles, where passenger car traffic is not a consideration. The road would be upgraded in portions to safely accommodate anticipated construction and operations and maintenance traffic. It is estimated that traffic on the paved portion in Las Campanas would increase at a rate of 3 percent per year on Camino La Tierra (Tierra Lopezgarcia Group 2004).

In general, the road would consist of a 20-foot-wide driving surface, with concrete dip sections rather than culverts at drainage crossings. The construction of the concrete dip sections would require a color additive (tan) to be mixed in with the cement to help reduce any visual impairment with the natural environment due to these structures. A visual simulation is shown in Figure 15.



**Figure 10. Schematic layout for City and County water treatment (not including PNM power upgrades).**



**Figure 11. Visual simulation of City and County water treatment plant (not including PNM upgrades).**



**Figure 12. Site of administration building for City and County water treatment plant at the municipal recreation complex.**



**Figure 13. Visual simulation of administration building for City and County water treatment plant at the municipal recreation complex.**

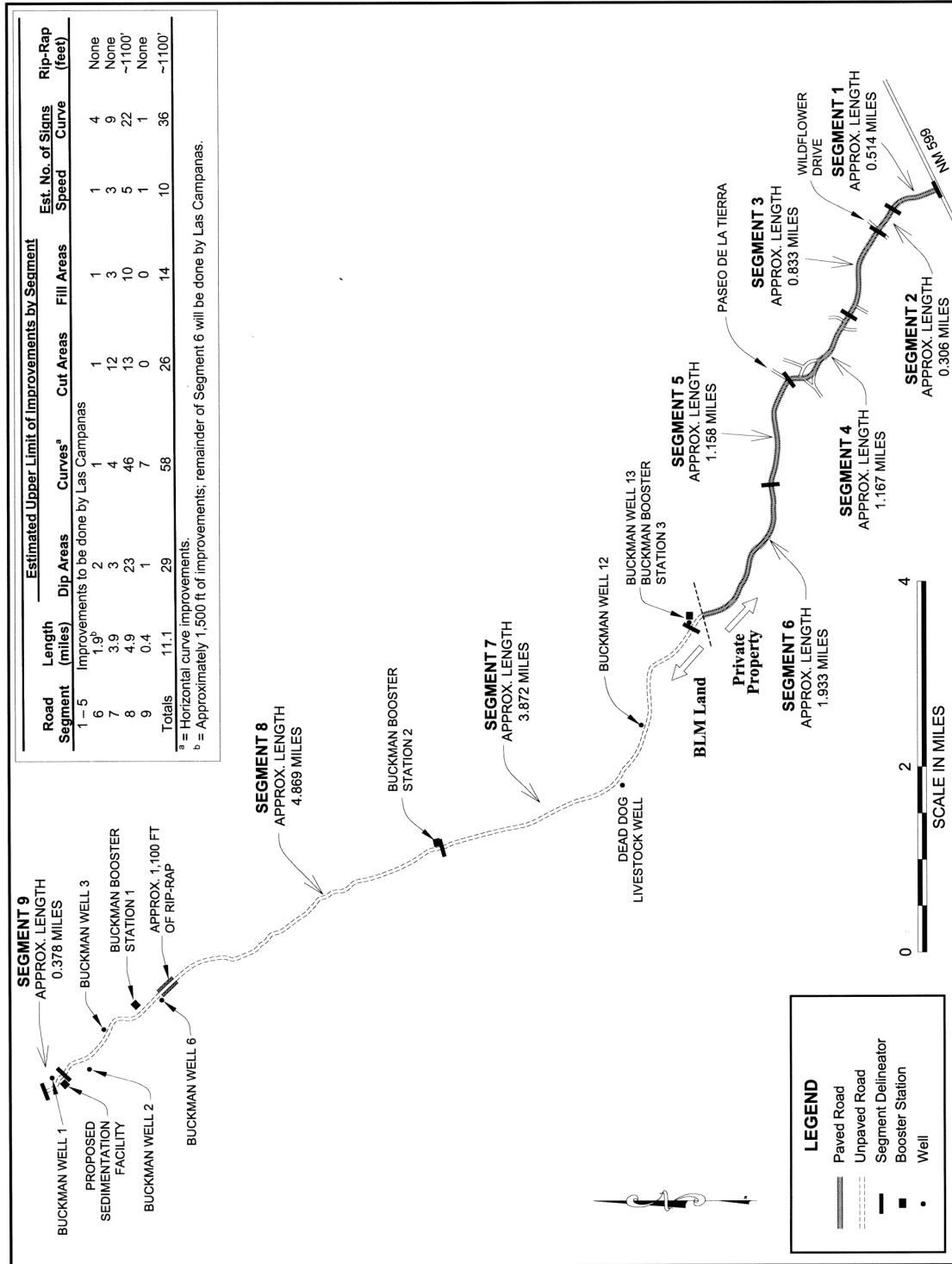


Figure 14. Buckman Road map showing areas of possible improvements.

Realignment of the roadway would be needed in certain areas to improve sight distance and to meet the needs of the road's low design speed. This would include the installation of concrete dip sections, cut and fill activities to correct for curve deficiencies, installation of road signs for speed control and curve identification, and the installation of rip-rap for erosion control. Superelevation of the road would be limited to 4 percent.

Road Segment 6 has a minimum number of improvements over a distance of 1.9 miles. Two concrete dip sections are estimated to be installed, cut and fill activities could occur at one location and up to five road signs could be installed. Road Segment 7 is approximately 3.9 miles in length. Up to three concrete dip sections and four curve improvements are estimated along Segment 7. In addition, the upper limit for cut and fill location improvements are 12 and 3, respectively. Finally, up to 12 road signs could be installed. Road Segment 8, also known as the Diablo Canyon area, is identified for having the most road improvements along an estimated 4.9 miles. It is estimated that up to 23 concrete dip sections and 46 curve improvements could be needed in this area. The maximum number of cut and fill areas could be 13 and 10, respectively. Last, up to 27 signs could be necessary along Road Segment 8. Road Segment 9 is approximately 0.4 mile in length and has the least number of estimated improvements. One concrete dip section, up to seven curve improvements and two road signs could be required along Road Segment 9.

In addition, one location in Road Segment 8 is identified to be lower than the adjacent arroyo. The road would need to be raised and side slopes would need to be protected from erosion with wire-enclosed rip-rap. Approximately 1,100 feet of rip-rap would be installed along Road Segment 8 (see Figure 14). No other road segment is identified for rip-rap installation. From the sediment removal facility to the river, no permanent road improvements are proposed and the existing road surface would not be changed unless modifications are needed to allow access for construction equipment.

A 6-inch crushed gravel base course would be applied and overlaid with a 6-inch compacted subgrade. Gravel would also be applied as needed to fill in ruts, and some areas may be regraded. The existing 9.2 mile road occupies about 20 acres of land. The new gravel road surface would occupy about 30 acres, and the improved drainage ditches alongside would occupy an additional 12 acres. Therefore, the land surface that is permanently occupied by the road and drainage features would increase by 22 acres along the 9.2-mile roadway course and increase in width by about 10 feet on either side. Water trucks would travel on the roadway surface spraying water for dust control as often as twice daily depending on weather conditions. Traffic control planning would be important in allowing public and City water operations staff to access the entire length of Buckman Road. The adjacent pipeline construction area and temporary use areas would assist in providing alternative means around construction areas along the road. In limited locations, temporary use areas could be as wide as 200 feet. The area of temporary disturbance is estimated to be approximately 23 acres. Temporary erosion control measures would be installed along roadway areas to minimize erosion. Upon completion of construction activities, the disturbed areas would be returned to pre-construction condition and revegetated according to the approved revegetation plan.

**Power Requirements.** Preliminary estimates from the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) indicate that power loads on the existing electrical supply infrastructure near the proposed MRC WTP and along the Buckman Road corridor are nearing capacity. PNM already plans to upgrade infrastructure along Caja del Rio Road sometime in the future. However, construction of the proposed MRC WTP would require that upgrades be finished earlier than currently necessary.



**Figure 15. Visual simulation of proposed Buckman Road improvements showing gravel surface and road dip channel crossing.**



For the Proposed Action, a new short segment of above ground 115 kV power line would be installed to connect existing above ground 115 kV lines to a new substation adjacent to the proposed MRC WTP. For the facilities along Buckman Road, the existing Buckman transformer station, located across from Booster Station 2, would be upgraded, and a new 12.47 kV buried cable would be installed along the entire reach between Booster Stations 2/2A and the river. This cable would be within the pipeline corridor identified for the action alternatives. An above ground power line along the same route is being considered as an alternative to the buried line. Further discussion of the proposed action for power upgrades and the above ground alternative is provided in the section “Power Upgrade Alternatives” later in this chapter.

In addition to the electrical upgrades, a new buried natural gas pipeline would be installed from Booster Station 1 to proposed Booster Station 1A. This pipeline would also be located within the pipeline corridor identified for the action alternatives.

### **Coordination and Accounting of Reservoir Releases and Diversions**

The City, County, and Las Campanas will work with the OSE, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), and Reclamation to develop a system for coordinating the release of San Juan-Chama Project water in accordance with their needs for diversion of that water. The applicants recognize they must coordinate operations of the Buckman Direct Diversion in order to ensure that water diverted from the Rio Grande is both legally and physically available for diversion, is accurately measured, is appropriately reduced by officially recognized and applicable conveyance losses from upstream reservoirs, and is appropriately accounted against valid State of New Mexico water rights. The applicants also recognize they must also comply with the applicable requirements of Federal laws governing reservoir operations, the contracts and operations requirements of reservoir owners and operators, and State Engineer water diversion permits.

The applicants will comply with all written conditions that the State Engineer from time to time may specify regarding the applicants’ coordination and prior notice of planned changes in daily average diversions of San Juan-Chama Project water at the Buckman Direct Diversion in order to coordinate associated river and reservoir operations. Through agreement with the involved Federal and State water management agencies, releases of San Juan-Chama water may be timed to coincide directly with water diversions through the Buckman Project. The applicants will comply with requirements to sustain adequate flows of native waters to facilitate silvery minnow habitat. Appropriate native water flows will be determined in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Alternately, an agreed arrangement for exchange and/or temporary storage may be used to alter reservoir release timing and create benefits for recreational or ecological purposes.

Conveyance losses as determined by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission or the Rio Grande Compact Commission will be subtracted from the amount of San Juan-Chama Project water released from Heron Reservoir or other upstream storage reservoirs containing San Juan-Chama Project water to determine the remaining amount of San Juan-Chama Project water available for diversion at the Buckman Direct Diversion.

Prior to any diversion of water, the City, County, and Las Campanas will install accurate flow measurement and recording devices acceptable to the New Mexico State Engineer, or order to measure the net diversion of water from the Rio Grande. The net diversion of water is the total diversion of water minus the amount of flow immediately returned to the Rio Grande for the

purposes of conveying diverted sand and sediment back to the river. The City, County, and Las Campanas also will establish a system that is acceptable to the State Engineer for the daily accounting and periodic reporting to the State Engineer regarding all of the water and associated water rights diverted from the Rio Grande at the Buckman Direct Diversion. They will make the diversion and water rights accounting records periodically available to the public.

### **Project Operation and Maintenance**

The Buckman diversion facilities would be operated and maintained on a regular basis to provide reliable conveyance and treatment of water for irrigation and potable uses. In addition to the planned operation and maintenance (O&M) activities discussed below, unscheduled maintenance may occasionally be required during operation of the facilities. Automatic monitoring, status indication and alarm functions for the pumps and other equipment would be transmitted through an electronic control system to operators. This would allow a rapid response by O&M staff should a malfunction or other problems occur.

During normal operations, it is anticipated that an operator would visit the diversion, pumping, and storage facilities three times per week to observe conditions and perform minor maintenance and cleaning. In addition, at least bimonthly (six times per year), maintenance activities would include the removal of accumulated sediment from the intake screens, pumps, and pipeline segments. Bimonthly maintenance activities would typically require a transport truck and trailer, dump truck(s), front-end loader, and backhoe.

**Diversion Structure.** The facilities would be designed to divert a peak flow of about 32 cfs. For the Proposed Action, low-head pumps would convey water to the sediment separation facility where sand would be separated and sand size particles greater than 0.1 mm would be returned to the river with up to 4 cfs of carriage water. For the sediment separation facility alternatives discussed in the section, “Sediment Separation Facility Alternatives,” various alternatives for handling sand are considered, including trucking it for sale or disposal rather than returning it to the river. The maximum net diversion flows (total diversion less returned carriage water) would be 28.2 cfs. System demands would govern the actual diversion flow. The diversion structure could operate 24 hours per day, but actual operation would be based upon system demands. The low-head pumps would be started or stopped to meet demands. The low-head pump station would be operated remotely through a supervisory control and data acquisition system to turn pumps on or off as needed. An air cleaning system would operate automatically on a daily basis to clean debris and sediment buildup on the intake screens.

**Sediment Separation Facility.** For the Proposed Action, the sediment separation facility would separate sediments through mechanical (vortex) processes. A sedimentation pond that would involve settling of particles by gravity would be included as a backup measure. Flows into the sediment facility would be governed by the low-head pump station and out of the facility by Booster Station 1A operation. The return flow of sand out of the facility back to the river would be controlled by an automated valve system connected to the electronic control system, and would be governed by the flow rate into the facility from the low-head pump station. Alternative sediment removal methods are discussed in the section, “Sediment Separation Facility Alternatives.”

**Booster Stations.** The booster stations would be designed to handle a peak flow of 28.2 cfs or 18.25 mgd (15 mgd for City and County, 3.25 mgd for Las Campanas). Actual flows would

depend on the demand from the City and County and Las Campanas. Pumps would be operated remotely through the electronic control system.

Booster Stations 1A and 2A are required to raise the water to the City and County WTP. Booster Station 3A is required by Las Campanas and would be located on Las Campanas property, near existing Booster Station 3. The new booster station would have a sediment pond associated with it, also on Las Campanas property, so that water flowing to the WTP would have reduced sediment concentrations. Booster Station 4A would convey treated water to existing Booster Station 3 which feeds into the City and County distribution systems via the 10-million-gallon storage tank in the northeast portion of the City. Booster Station 5A would convey treated water into the City and County distribution system through new piping connected to the southwest portion of the system. Booster Stations 4A and 5A would operate while the WTP is in operation and would be controlled based upon system demands including the tank level at the existing Booster Station 3 and tank levels in the storage tanks throughout the service area. Booster Station 4A would be sized to pump 8.9 mgd to existing Booster Station 3 and Booster Station 5A would be sized to pump 15 mgd to the distribution system.

**Pipelines.** For the Proposed Action, separate raw water pipelines would convey water to two water treatment plants, one for the City and County and one for Las Campanas. As discussed later in this chapter, a combined raw water pipeline alternative is also being considered and there are several treated water pipeline alternatives. The new pipelines would typically operate normally with no required attention. Condition of the pipe would be monitored through flow meters and pressure sensors at adjoining booster stations. Accuracy of the flow meters would be maintained to sufficiently determine if leakage was occurring between booster stations. The actual frequency of pipe leaks cannot be predicted but based upon the strength of the proposed pipe, repair frequency could be as little as once in 20 years. The current Buckman line has had no substantial leaks or breaks in nearly 30 years of operation.

Monitoring of the flow data would be conducted continuously using the electronic control and monitoring system. Operators would travel the length of the pipeline in combination with other facility visits previously discussed. Additionally, valves located on the lines and other appurtenances would be maintained or otherwise operated quarterly to ensure continual proper operation. Pressure reducing valves and meters located along the distribution system would also require periodic maintenance, perhaps annually. Periodic cleaning of the pipe or condition assessment would be done as necessary, but likely no more than once every 3 to 5 years. This maintenance would require complete flushing of the pipe segment and disposal of the flushed water. Cathodic protection of piping may be required using sacrificial anodes or an impressed current system. At a minimum, pipe bonding and test stations would be used to monitor pipeline corrosion.

**City and County MRC WTP.** Operation of the City and County MRC WTP would be similar to that of the City's existing Canyon Road WTP. A plant operations and maintenance staff of approximately 15 employees is used at that plant. That staff also oversees the operation of the Buckman and City Well Fields. Operations and maintenance for the entire Buckman water system would be conducted primarily from the new plant with a smaller staff stationed at the existing Canyon Road plant. The plant staff would then be substantially closer to the Buckman Well Field facilities as well as other City facilities.

Approximately 15 employees would be onsite at one time with at least one certified operator present 24 hours a day. Operators would oversee operation of the plant utilizing direct observation plus instruments and an automatic monitoring and data storage system. Extensive record keeping would be essential for both regulatory requirements and optimization of the treatment facilities.

Continual optimization of chemical feed systems and water quality changes would be important to provide high quality drinking water as well as minimize sludge volumes. Water quality monitoring instruments are necessary to assist operators in this endeavor and include particle counters, turbidity monitors, pH and temperature meters, and chlorine residual analyzers. Proper chemical feed is critical to providing high quality drinking water. Therefore, approximately 1 month's supply of each chemical would be provided at the treatment plant. Most chemicals would be delivered separately with a few exceptions. Chemical transport and storage would meet requirements set by State and Federal regulations.

Solids generation is a component of a conventional treatment plant process. Solids settled out in the sedimentation ponds would consist mainly of solids from the river plus iron or aluminum salts from the addition of a primary coagulant. These solids would be separated from water on the filter media. These solids also would likely be thickened in solids thickeners and the water content further reduced in drying lagoons. The use of sludge drying lagoons is assumed as the lagoons require significant land space and could, therefore, be considered to represent the worst case for environmental purposes. However, mechanical presses housed within a building could be constructed in lieu of the drying lagoons. It is anticipated that the thickened solids would be hauled and disposed of at the Caja del Rio Landfill located just southwest of the treatment plant.

**Las Campanas WTP.** The operation of the Las Campanas WTP would be continuous, 24 hours per day and 365 days per year. However, the facility normally would be unmanned. An operator would visit the plant up to five times per week to observe conditions and perform minor maintenance and cleaning. Daily monitoring of the water quality parameters would be conducted with dedicated instrumentation. Quarterly testing of the WTP process and controls would also be conducted. Similar to the City and County WTP, up to 1 month of chemicals would be stored onsite, limiting chemical deliveries to once a month. Many chemicals could be delivered during the same visit or in two trips. However, chlorine would likely be delivered separately. Chemical transport and storage would meet requirements set by State and Federal regulations.

Similar to the City and County WTP, solids would be generated by the treatment process. Solids may be handled in two ways. The solids could be conveyed directly to the existing Las Campanas Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) where the solids would be removed, dewatered, and disposed of in conjunction with the WWTP process. Otherwise, the solids would be dried in drying beds or lagoons and disposed of at the Caja del Rio Landfill.

**Buckman Road and Power Upgrade Maintenance.** Buckman Road and the new power upgrades would be subject to normal maintenance. Buckman Road would continue to be maintained by the County. The gravel improvements would require less maintenance than the current dirt road; however, maintenance would continue to include periodic reblading and contouring and, in addition, new gravel would be added as needed. Power facilities would be maintained by PNM using standard maintenance procedures.

## Water Operations

### System Capacity and Flow Volumes

The Buckman Project would be designed to collect, convey, treat, and distribute up to 18.2 mgd (28.2 cfs). This amount does not include up to 4 cfs of carriage water that would be diverted and then used to carry settled sand back to the river. For analysis purposes, the total maximum annual flow through the diversion is assumed to include 5,230 ac-ft/yr for the City, 1,700 ac-ft/yr for the County, and 1,800 ac-ft/yr for Las Campanas – a total of 8,730 ac-ft/yr. These numbers are shown in Table 2. The maximum annual diversion of 8,730 ac-ft/yr is equivalent to a year-round average flow of 12 cfs, as compared to the peak flow of 28.2 cfs that could occur at any given time during the year. The peak flows and total annual quantities are documented in Section 2.4 of the Feasibility Study and Recommendations for San Juan-Chama Water Diversion (CDM 2002a).

The volume of water diverted at Buckman would fluctuate throughout the year based upon water demand. Estimates of the maximum monthly diversion in 2010 were made by using historical water usage data and by developing estimates of water demands in 2010. These estimates were calculated based upon the total demand minus the availability of the other sources of water including the Santa Fe River, City Well Field, and Buckman Well Field. The Las Campanas demand was then added to the City and County demand. For analysis purposes, Table 3 presents the maximum usage by month for all applicants, irrespective of sharing agreements between the applicants. For example, some of the water used by Las Campanas may be diverted by the City and supplied to Las Campanas.

Table 3 shows the maximum monthly average diversion projections for all proponents for each month under 2010 drought conditions. The maximum monthly average diversion would not occur in every month nor is it likely to occur in consecutive months. Peak flow through the diversion would most likely occur during the summer months when water demand is the highest. During 7 months (October-April), the maximum monthly average flow would be less than 70 percent of the peak day diversion of 28.2 cfs. The daily diversion volume during any given month would vary from a net flow of zero to 28.2 cfs, averaging 12 cfs over the course of a year.

**Table 2. Maximum annual and peak-day usage for the Buckman Project.**

Water User	Maximum Annual Diversion (ac-ft/yr)	Maximum Peak-Day Diversion	
		MGD	CFS
City	5,230	11.3	17.5
County	1,700	3.7	5.7
Las Campanas	1,800	3.2	5.0
Total	8,730	18.2	28.2

**Table 3. Distribution of expected maximum monthly average diversions.**

Month	MGD	CFS
January	7.3	11.3
February	8.2	12.7
March	9.1	14.1
April	11.8	18.2
May	15.4	23.8
June	18.2	28.2
July	16.9	26.1
August	15.4	23.8
September	14.6	22.6
October	12.7	19.6
November	9.1	14.1
December	7.3	11.3

The diversion is contingent upon the availability of water, and may include diversion of water at the peak capacity, during emergency conditions subject to operational constraints to protect the silvery minnow. The diversion could operate 24 hours a day, 365 days per year with at least a minimal diversion flow rate. However, diversion may cease temporarily under numerous conditions:

- Flows in the river below the design capacity – the system would not be able to operate at full capacity when river flows are below about 200 cfs and would need to shut down when river flows are below about 150 cfs
- Electrical outage – all facilities near the river would operate solely on electrical power
- Catastrophic mechanical problem
- Upstream spills of pollutants
- Extraordinary sediment transport events
- Serious maintenance events

During flow rate shortage periods in the Rio Grande such that normal and/or peak operations of the facility are adversely affected, the allocation of water for diversion by the facility will treat native Rio Grande flows separately from imported San Juan-Chama Project water (i.e., during shortage sharing scenarios these two different water sources will not be co-mingled). The FS/BLM, in fulfillment of the NEPA process, is consulting with the FWS to develop a biological assessment. The biological assessment includes a discussion of potential impacts to the flora and fauna, and mitigation measures recommended for implementation, including an operations plan that addresses flow conditions. The FWS will issue a biological opinion, based upon the biological assessment. The applicants will be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions identified in the biological opinion.

Because of system redundancies at all facilities, maintenance can be performed on the facilities and equipment during operation in most cases. Shut down of the diversion facilities for maintenance would occur only a few times per year, at most.

## **Sediment Separation Facility Alternatives**

A sediment separation facility associated with the Proposed Action and two alternative sediment separation facilities are under consideration. Alternative sediment facility locations are illustrated in Figures 16 and 17. A comparison of the features of the sediment facility alternatives can be found in Table 4.

### **Sediment Facility Associated With the Proposed Action**

The sediment facility location for the Proposed Action would be in close proximity to the Rio Grande and constructed on the historic Buckman townsite. This area is within the viewshed of the river and riverside visitors and is readily visible from the observation platform in White Rock Overlook Park. Construction and operation would occur on the historic Buckman townsite. Several alternatives were developed in response to these viewshed and cultural resource issues. All alternatives would involve mechanical (vortex) separators to remove the sand particles greater than 0.1 mm from the diverted river water. This alternative would include a small sedimentation pond that would be used as a backup if the mechanical separators failed.

**Sediment Facility Alternative SF1**

For this alternative, the facility would be the same as for the Proposed Action, but the location would be different. In order to minimize effects to the viewshed and the Buckman townsite, Sediment Facility Alternative SF1 was developed. This alternative would move the sediment facility southeast of the proposed location and generally out of sight from area visitors and observers at White Rock Overlook Park. The location would be entirely off the Buckman townsite.

**Table 4. Sediment facility alternatives.**

Facility	Proposed Action (PA)	Alternative SF1	Alternative SF2
Sediment Facility	Mechanical separation with pond for emergency storage of sediment, approximately 50 x 100 feet.  Return pipeline back to the river: 2,200 feet, 8- to 10-inch diameter.	Same mechanical separation and sediment pond as PA; at new location to avoid the Buckman historical site with less visibility from White Rock Overlook.  Longer pipeline.	Same location as SF1 with larger sedimentation pond for storage of sands coarser than 0.1 mm.  No return line; trucks haul sediment to offsite permitted disposal area.
Diversion Intake Structure	Six manifold screened intake structure with 32 cfs peak intake capacity and 4 cfs capacity for sand return to the river.  Low-head pump station with 6 pumps and equipment vault/building.  Pipeline from diversion to sediment facility: 1,000 feet long, 30-inch diameter.	Same as PA  More power required in pumps to reach sediment facility  Longer pipeline to reach sediment facility	Sand trucked away; peak intake capacity reduced to 28 cfs with no return line.  Same as PA  Same as PA
Proposed Booster Station 1	High-head pump station including five City/County pumps and three Las Campanas pumps within 5,000-square-foot building adjacent to sediment facility.	New location next to the changed location of the sediment facility.	Same as PA

**Sediment Facility Alternative SF2**

Sediment Facility Alternative SF2 was developed as a contingency plan should the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) not issue a sediment return discharge permit under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. This alternative would require trucking out sediment for disposal at the Caja del Rio Landfill. Like Alternative SF1, the facility would be located southeast of the proposed location, entirely off the Buckman townsite.

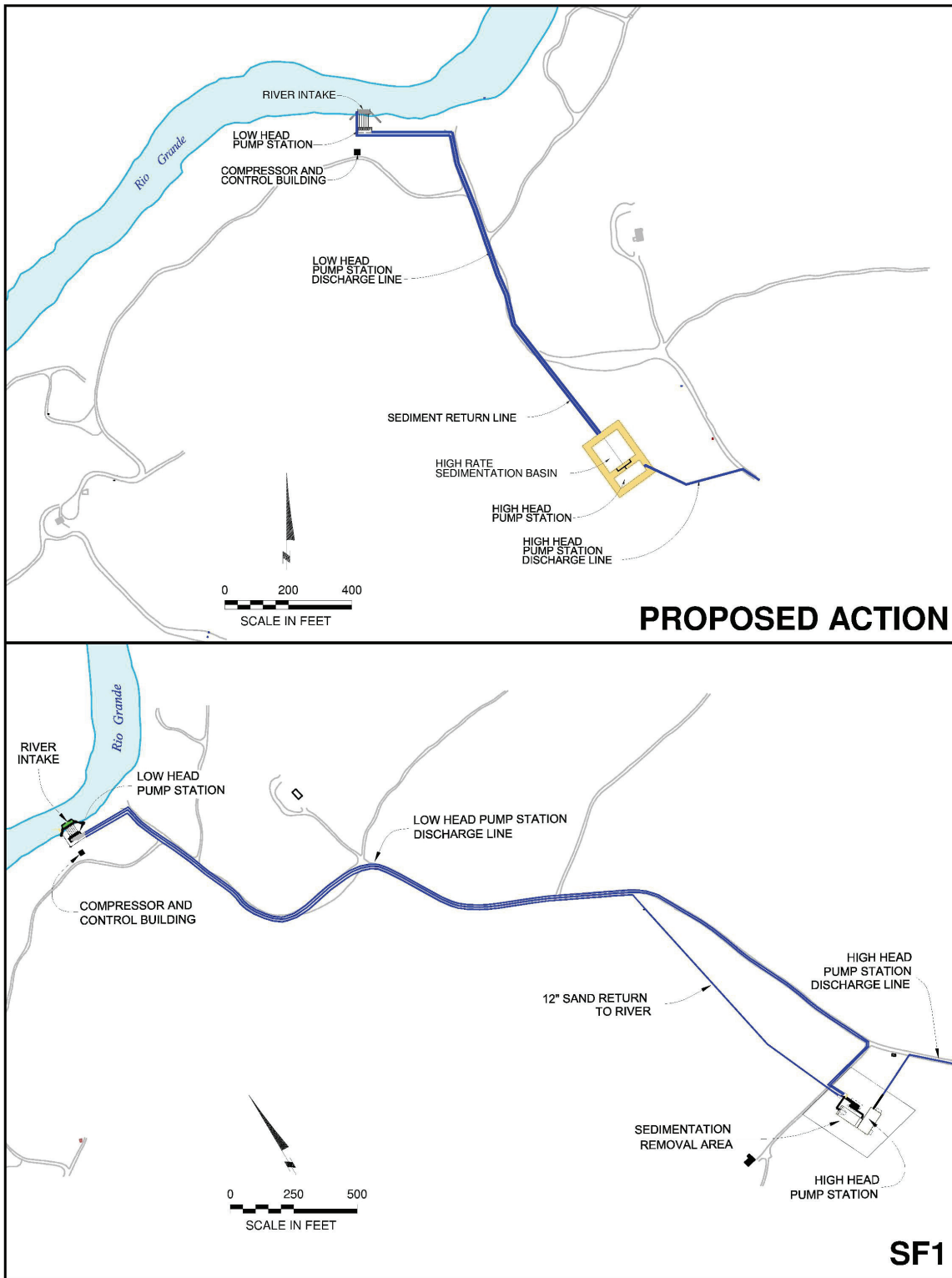
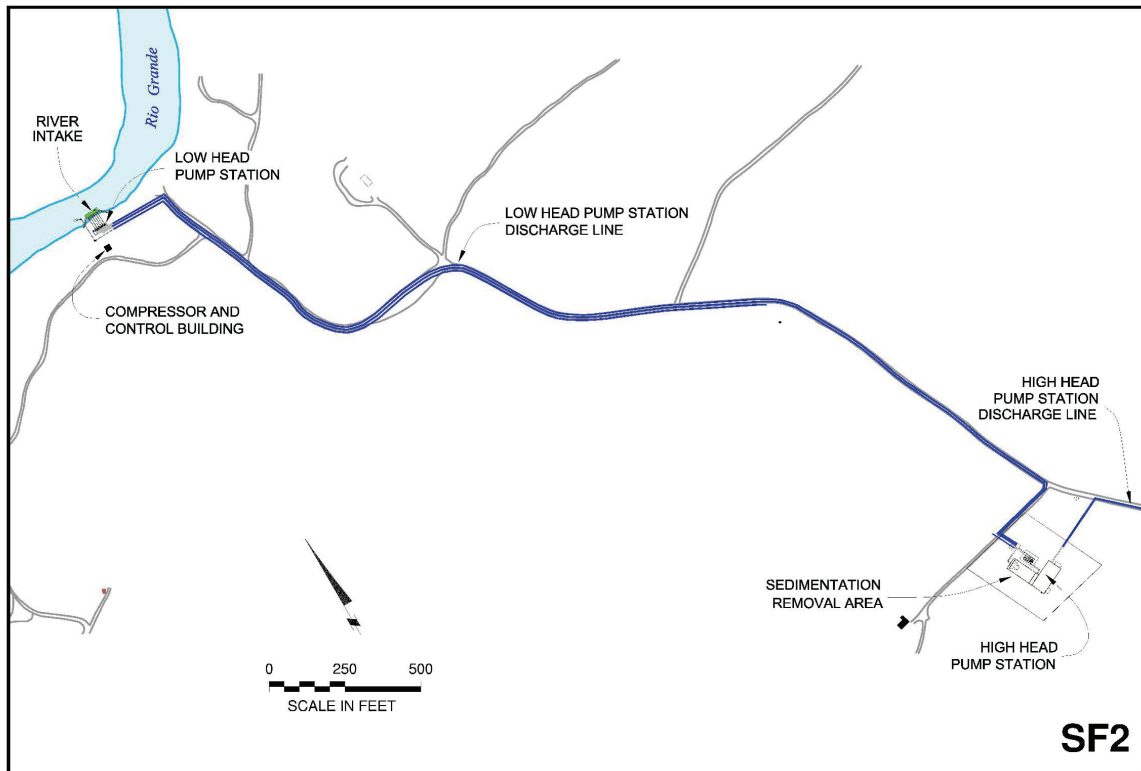


Figure 16. Sediment facility associated with the Proposed Action and Sediment Facility Alternative SF1.





**Figure 17. Sediment Facility Alternative SF2.**

Under this alternative there would be no sediment return line from the sediment facility to the Rio Grande. The sand would be discharged to lined ponds for storage and drying. Based on estimated sediment loading of the material coarser than 0.1 millimeter (mm), plus an additional 5 percent entrapment of smaller sediments, two lined ponds would be required. Each pond would be about 75 feet by 150 feet by 8 feet deep. One pond would be in operation, receiving sand from the vortex separators, while the other would be used for storage and drying. Dried sand would be removed and transported by truck approximately 20 miles for disposal at the Caja del Rio Landfill. On average, about 700 truck trips per year (7-yard capacity) are expected to be needed to remove the dried sand from the pond system. In some years, depending upon the Rio Grande sediment load, more than 1,000 truck trips could be required.

## Pipeline Alternatives

A raw water pipeline (RWP) alternative and three treated water pipeline (TWP) alternatives are being considered.

### Pipelines Associated with the Proposed Action

Pipelines associated with the Proposed Action are discussed in the section, “Proposed Action” earlier in this chapter and their locations are illustrated in Figure 3. Alternatives are being considered for two segments of the Proposed Action pipelines. For the Proposed Action, two raw water pipelines are being considered between Booster Station 1A and Booster Station 2A, one for conveying water to Las Campanas and the other for conveying water to the City and County. A

single pipeline is being considered as an alternative. In addition, three alternatives are being considered for the location of the 18,113-foot treated water pipeline that would run from the proposed City and County WTP at the MRC.

**Raw Water Pipeline Alternative**

This alternative, RWP1, involves substituting a single pipeline for a double pipeline from Booster Station 1A to proposed Booster Station 2A, shown in Figure 3. This alternative is being considered for reasons that include reduced disturbance of two cultural sites in the utility ROW, less cost, and reduced ground and habitat disturbance associated with construction.

A comparison of the features of this alternative and that of the Proposed Action is provided in Table 5.

**Table 5. Raw Water Pipeline Alternative.**

Facility	Proposed Action (PA)	Alternative RWP1
Raw water transmission pipeline from BS 1A to BS 2A	Pumps would fill separate pipelines (see below for exact description).	One line with capacity for peak flows for both City/County demand and Las Campanas demand.
Proposed BS 2A (near existing BS 2 on BLM property).	High-head pump station including five City/County pumps, three Las Campanas pumps, and 500,000-gallon storage tank within 5,000-square-foot building	Same as PA

Key: BS = Booster Station

**Treated Water Pipeline Alternatives**

These three alternatives primarily involve different alignments of the northern water transmission line for treated water between the proposed City and County

WTP at the MRC and existing Booster Station 3. These alternatives are being considered for reasons that include minimizing destruction/replacement of a County roadway in Las Campanas, lessening traffic disruptions, use of a shorter and less costly pipeline alignment, and possibly even affecting property values. Other reasons include reduced commitment of BLM land and the precedent for long-term commitment of some new lands to utility uses. The alternative pipeline routes are illustrated in Figure 18. A comparison of the features of these alternatives can be found in Table 6.

**Treated Water Pipeline Alternative TWP1.** This alternative would require approximately 18,193 feet of pipeline, which is about the same length as the Proposed Action pipeline corridor (18,113 feet). This alternative runs along the boundary between Las Campanas and BLM lands. One cultural resource site would be affected compared to the two cultural resource sites under the Proposed Action. This alternative would avoid construction beneath Las Campanas Drive thus avoiding the additional cost of repairing the road, short-term construction disruption to Las Campanas residents and users of Las Campanas Drive, and the need for an easement through some Las Campanas property.

**Treated Water Pipeline Alternative TWP2.** This alternative would run approximately 21,528 feet of pipeline back toward Dead Dog Well and then cut east. Where it deviates east from the existing corridor, a new 7,450-foot utility corridor on BLM land would be required. A new ROW would be issued for the entire length of pipeline necessary under Alternative TWP2. This alternative would avoid all cultural resource sites and avoid affecting traffic on Las Campanas Drive.

**Treated Water Pipeline Alternative TWP3.** This alternative would require the longest pipeline route, utilizing approximately 30,337 feet of pipe. This route is within existing utility corridors, thus no new utility corridors would be required. However, a new ROW would be issued for the entire length of pipeline necessary under Alternative TWP3. In addition, it would cross the Denver & Rio Grande railroad grade (the Chili Line) in four places. This alternative, similar to Alternatives TWP1 and TWP2, would avoid construction within Las Campanas Drive.

**Table 6. Treated Water Pipeline Alternatives.**

Facility	Proposed Action (PA)	Alternative TWP1	Alternative TWP2	Alternative TWP3
Transmission line to convey treated water from the City/County MRC WTP to existing Booster Station 3.	Line would run beneath Las Campanas Drive, western loop; one-half mile at the north would run across BLM lands.	Line would run along the boundary between Las Campanas and BLM land.	Line would run back toward Dead Dog Well and cut east to Booster Station 3.	Line would run back to Dead Dog Well before following Buckman Road to Booster Station 3.

Key: MRC = Municipal Recreation Complex; WTP = Water Treatment Plant

## Power Upgrade Alternatives

As mentioned earlier at the end of the section, “Project Construction,” preliminary estimates from PNM indicate that power loads associated with the Buckman Project would accelerate the need for planned power upgrades in the area. The power upgrades associated with the Proposed Action would include a new 12.47 kV underground power line between Booster Stations 2/2A and the river. A lower cost alternative, designated Alternative AGP1b, would involve new above ground 12.47 kV power lines. The majority of the upgrades would be located on land administered by BLM and on the MRC, which is BLM land leased for use by the City.

Either alternative would also involve upgrades to the existing Buckman substation within the current (or, if necessary, amended) ROW and construction of a new substation either adjacent to the MRC WTP in the case of the Proposed Action, or approximately 1 mile southeast of the MRC WTP in the case of Alternative AGP1a. The BLM would supply final approval for the color of both the upgraded Buckman substation as well as any new substation. The alternative substation site location was selected to minimize use of BLM lands. The location of the alternative substation site is on lands managed by the City of Santa Fe for the MRC. The land area needed for a new substation is approximately 250 feet by 350 feet (about 2 acres). PNM typically purchases property for new substations. Since the Proposed Action substation site near the MRC WTP is on Federal property, PNM would need to secure a permit for all proposed facilities. The 115 kV transmission line termination structures for the substation would be tubular steel structures. Finish may be weathering steel (brown) or a dulled galvanized coating (gray) and non-specular wire would be used. The electrical equipment yard would include power circuit breakers, disconnect switches, lightning/surge arrestors, and bus (conductor) support structures. Bus support structures would have a dulled galvanized finish. Other structures would include a control house.

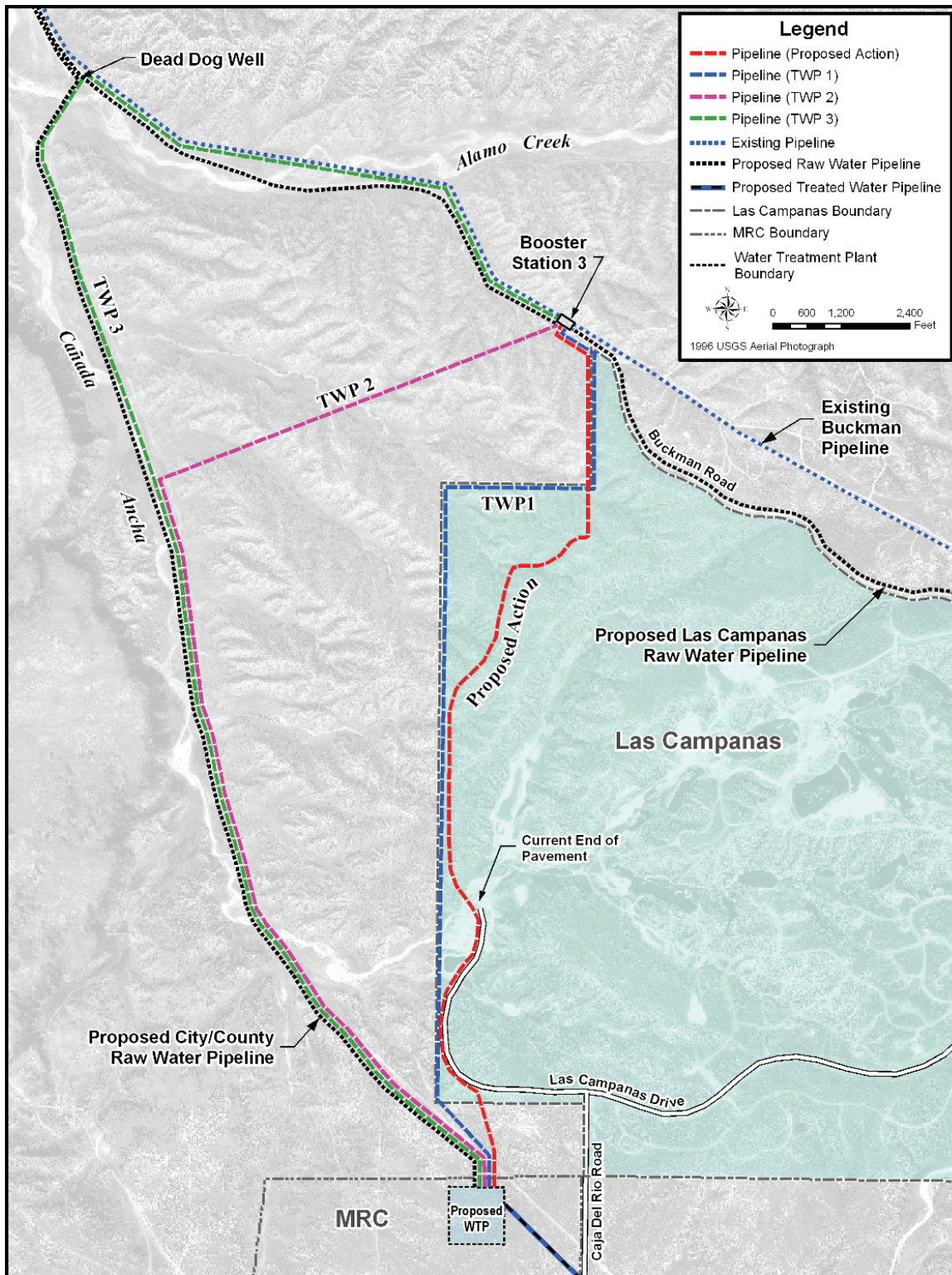


Figure 18. Treated Water Pipeline Alternatives.

Construction of a new above ground 115 kV transmission line generally follows the sequence of surveying the centerline, access road development, clearing ROW and structure sites, installation of foundations, assembly and erection of the structures, installation of conductors and overhead shield wires, installation of grounding system, and cleanup and site reclamation. The workforce and types of equipment would vary during the construction period. The number of personnel necessary to perform the work would range up to approximately 20 persons. Multiple crews may be working on the transmission line. Equipment is anticipated to include several pickup trucks, several larger (2 ton) trucks, a light crane, a 60-ton crane, an auger, reel trailers, drum pullers, conductor tensioner, bulldozer, and grader. Miscellaneous small power tools may require the use of generators and air compressors. Construction may need to be staged in a specific sequence in order to minimize outages and/or take advantage of low electrical load periods.

No grading is planned for an access road for the 115 kV line. A temporary access road may be needed to install the line but once completed, the disturbed areas would be rehabilitated. PNM may access the line on an as-needed basis but a ROW would not be issued for a permanent road underneath or adjacent to the line.

### **Power Upgrade Associated with the Proposed Action**

The power upgrades associated with the Proposed Action would include facilities along Buckman Road, the existing Buckman transformer substation, located across from Booster Station 2, and a new 12.47 kV underground power line within a utility corridor between Booster Stations 2/2A and the river. This cable would be within the pipeline corridor identified for the action alternatives. The existing utility easement within the corridor would need to be widened from 40 to 50 feet to accommodate joint use of the proposed electric power lines and pipelines. The new 12.47 kV buried power line would be installed along the entire reach between the Buckman transformer station, Booster Station 2/2A and the river. Existing easements between the Buckman transformer station and the proposed pipeline corridor would also need to be widened to accommodate a second 12.47 kV power line. The placement of all utilities within the utility corridor and the required width of the actual easements necessary for those utilities would be developed within a plan of development (POD) document.

The Proposed Action would also include a new substation that would be constructed adjacent to the proposed MRC WTP. The final color of any new substation would be approved by BLM. A new above ground 115 kV power line segment less than one-half mile in length would be required to connect the new substation to existing 115 kV above ground lines in the area.

### **Power Upgrade Alternatives AGP1a and AGP1b**

Alternative AGP1 would involve two primary differences from the Proposed Action (Table 7). Under Alternative AGP1a, a new substation would be located under or adjacent to the existing 115 kV line which currently crosses Caja Del Rio Road. A new underground 12.47 kV (4 wires for each circuit) line approximately 200 to 400 feet long would run east from the new substation and connect to the existing underground distribution system that runs along Caja Del Rio Road. A second new underground line would run west from the existing distribution system within the proposed right-of-way for the access road to the WTP, approximately one-half mile.

Alternative AGP1b would require an upgrade of the existing Buckman transformer station (as with the Proposed Action). Under Alternative AGP1b, an above ground 12.47 kV power line from

the Buckman transformer station, near Booster Station 2/2A, to the river route would be built as an alternative to the buried 12.47 kV line.

The final color of the upgraded Buckman transformer station and new substation would be approved by BLM.

**Table 7. Above Ground Power Alternative AGP1.**

Facility/Location	Proposed Action (PA)	Above Ground Power Alternative AGP1
Power supply to water treatment plant (WTP) at the Municipal Recreation Complex (MRC).	Substation adjacent to WTP. Power to the WTP via an overhead line across BLM land with a new substation next to the WTP.	AGP1a. Power to the WTP via a substation at Caja del Rio Road with buried line to the WTP.
Power supply to pump facility at the river.	Power to the riverside pumping facilities via a new buried line.	AGP1b. Power to the riverside pumping facilities via a new above ground power line.

Figure 19 shows the location of the power upgrades for both the Proposed Action and Alternative AGP1. Figure 19 also identifies the locations of three visual simulations that are provided in Figures 20 to 22. Figure 20 presents a visual simulation of the Alternative AGP1b above ground 12.47 kV power line that would travel from the Buckman transformer station, past Booster Station 2/2A to the river. Figure 21 provides a visual simulation of how the above ground 115 kV facilities associated with the Proposed Action would appear near the MRC WTP. Figure 22 presents a visual simulation of the Alternative AGP1 substation site located along Caja Del Rio Road. The final color of power upgrade facilities and substations associated with the Proposed Action and Alternative AGP1 would be approved by the BLM.

## Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Requirements

The following mitigation measures and monitoring requirements apply to all alternatives including the Proposed Action, unless otherwise noted. Regardless of which alternative is selected, mitigation would be incorporated into the project to reduce the severity of any potential environmental consequences. Specific details about how these measures would be implemented and who would be responsible for their implementation would be specified in the implementation plan. An implementation plan would be prepared with assistance from government agency personnel following a Record of Decision on the project, if it is decided to proceed with any alternative other than the No Action Alternative.

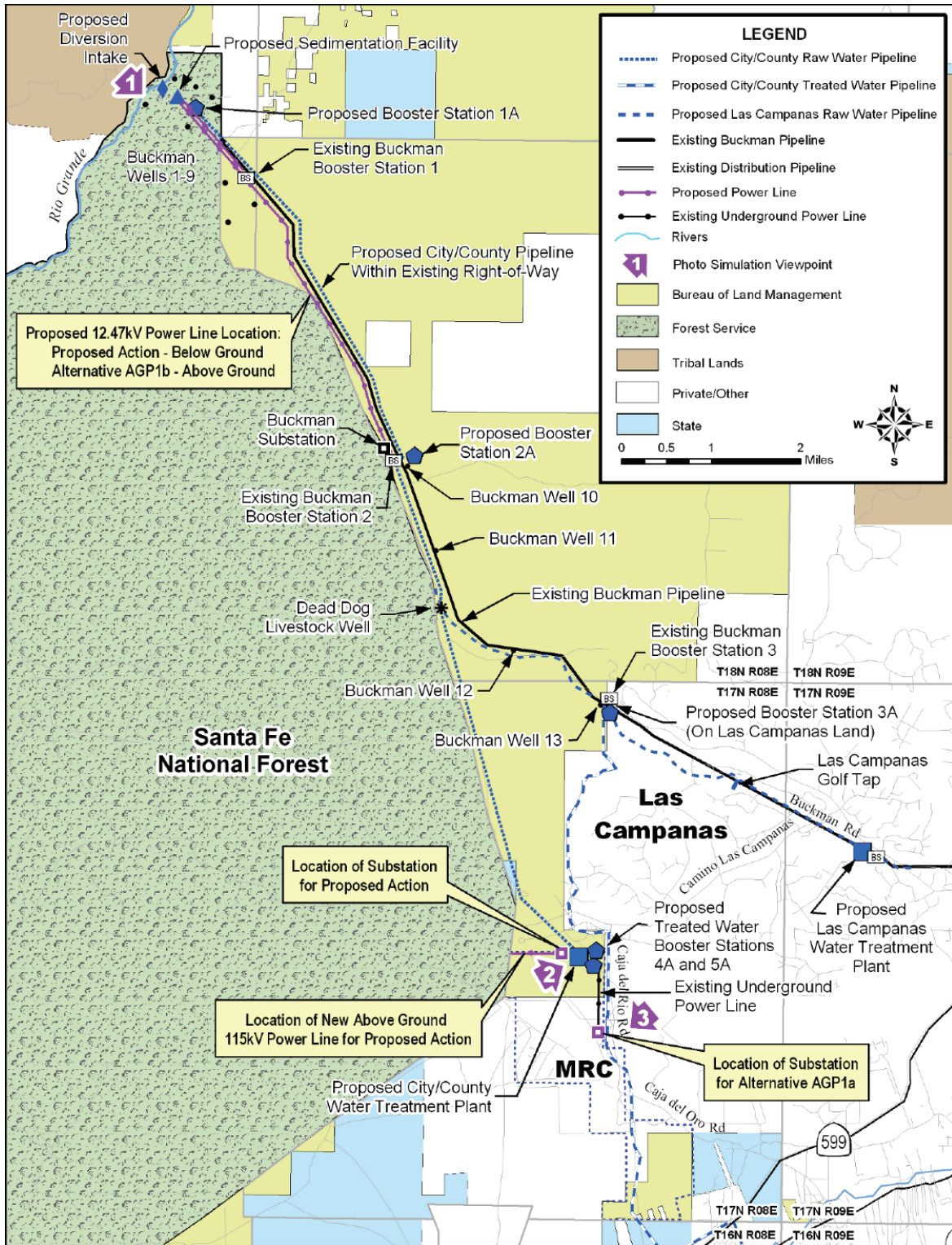
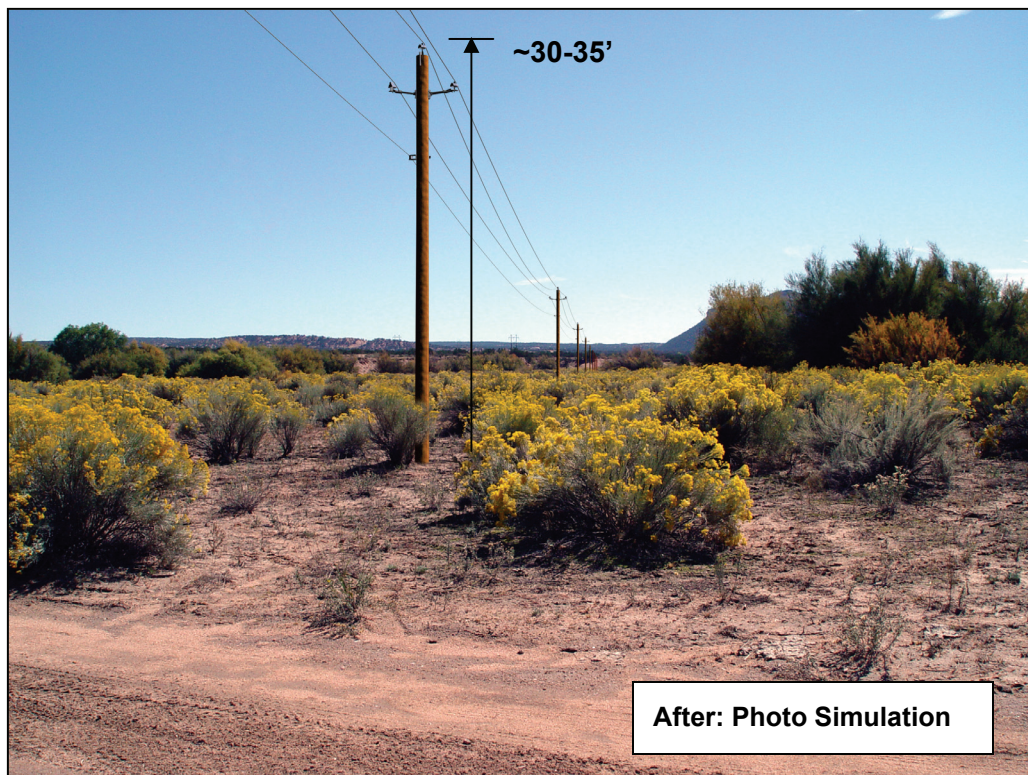
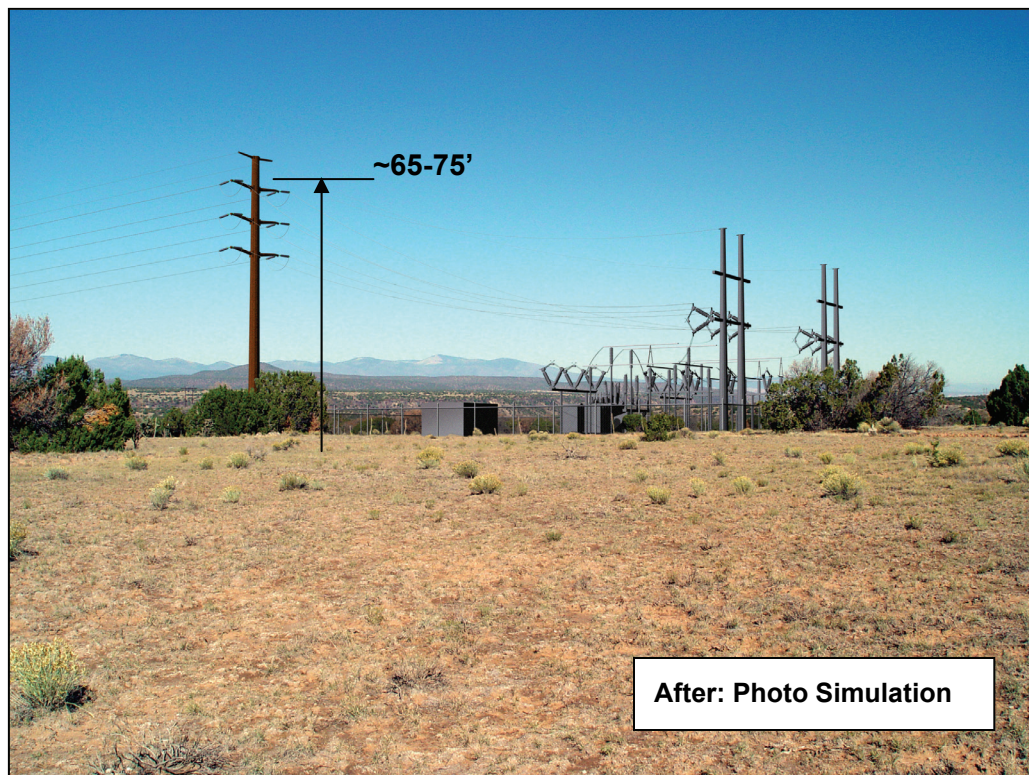


Figure 19. Location of power upgrade facilities for Proposed Action and Alternative AGP1.

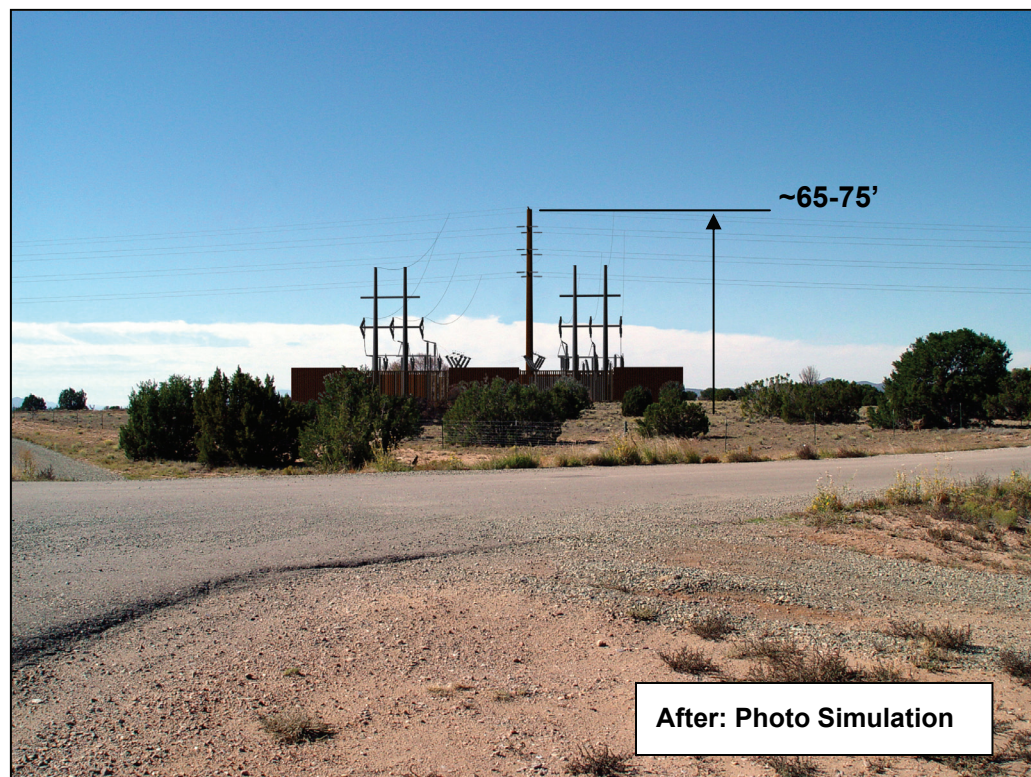


**Figure 20. Photographic simulation of 12.47 kV power lines associated with Alternative AGP1b, looking southeast near diversion site, at Position 1 on Figure 19.**





**Figure 21. Photographic simulation of proposed substation and 115 kV above ground line at MRC WTP, looking northwest at Position 2 on Figure 19.**



**Figure 22. Photographic simulation of substation for connection to existing 115 kV line along Caja Del Rio Road associated with Alternative AGP1a, looking southeast at Position 3 on Figure 19.**

## Land Tenure and Use

**Construction and Operation Phase.** Based on a potential increase in visitor use to this area resulting from proposed upgrades to Buckman Road, visitor use will be monitored. Prior to construction and after construction is complete, agencies will evaluate the magnitude of increased visitation, and the FS and BLM will take actions to reduce visitation as needed to protect the resources and facilities in the area.

## Water Resources

**Construction Phase.** Placement of a cofferdam in the river that would surround and isolate the construction area would serve to mitigate most direct effects on turbidity during construction of the water diversion structure. In addition, the cofferdam is projected to be in place for about 5 months during periods of low flow in summer and autumn.

**Operation Phase.** Design criteria, which would restrict or eliminate withdrawals at or below minimum flow thresholds would mitigate possible reductions to the lowest flows and associated impacts to aquatic habitat. If the flow in the river were below about 200 cfs, it would not be possible to operate the diversion at the peak withdrawal capacity of 32 cfs. In addition, if the flow in the Rio Grande were below a lower threshold of about 150 cfs, the diversion would not be operational. Between these flow conditions it would be possible to operate the diversion at reduced capacity. The precise limits of low flow operation would be determined during final design of the diversion facility. An operations plan will determine the various flow strategies to be employed based on the available waters. The operations plan would likely include a curtailment strategy to minimize impacts to the Rio Grande silvery minnow. The operations plan is a subsection of the biological assessment, which is being developed in consultation with the FWS.

Residual offsets for ground water depletion from past pumping would need to be implemented as mitigation for switching to the surface diversion. The City and Las Campanas are currently required to offset depletions of flows in the Rio Grande that occur as a result of pumping from the Buckman Well Field. After bringing the diversion structure online, with substantially reduced pumping from the wells, the infiltration of river water into the aquifer would decrease over time. However, even with substantially reduced pumping from the wells in the future, the City and Las Campanas would be required to continue to provide residual offsets of flows from past pumping from the Buckman Well Field. The offset amount is currently about 2,500 ac-ft/yr. This amount is projected to decrease in the future, as the aquifer would rebound. San Juan-Chama water currently being stored by the City would be released in the future to satisfy these offsets. In addition, the City anticipates purchasing and retiring additional rights to satisfy residual offsets. After all stored San Juan-Chama water has been released and if additional rights are not procured and retired, the applicants would need to balance diversions with pumping such that offset and diversion amounts would not exceed their combined San Juan-Chama and existing native water rights.

## Biological Resources

**Construction Phase.** A revegetation program utilizing native seeds would be required to mitigate the effects of vegetation removed during construction. The revegetation seed mixture would consist of forbs, grasses, and shrubs of species common to the Buckman area. At the Rio Grande diversion site, which is characterized by a dense, narrow band of mixed native and nonnative

riparian vegetation, revegetation with cottonwood and coyote willow would occur. The area requiring revegetation would be about 2 acres. The program would include measures to control or eradicate nonnative and invasive species within the project construction area. Species posing a threat to the native biological diversity of the area would be identified (such as salt cedar, Russian olive, and toadflax) and eradicated prior to construction soil disturbance. Additionally, weed prevention best management practices, such as a requirement to clean construction vehicles prior to their operation in the project area, would be implemented.

Placement of a cofferdam in the river that would surround and isolate the construction area would serve to decrease turbidity during construction of the diversion structure, thus limiting and mitigating the potentially adverse effects to aquatic fauna. However, some localized higher turbidity would be expected to occur during placement of the cofferdam and from its removal.

During project construction, wildlife habitat would be affected, thus the following mitigations would address the potential short-term affects. A pre-construction survey for avian fauna protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would be conducted at the water diversion site along the Rio Grande, booster station and water treatment locations, and the selected pipeline routes. Depending upon the survey data, a mitigation plan would be developed at that time and specific mitigations, if any, would be based on the survey findings. For example, the discovery of nesting birds could result in relocation or delay of planned construction activities.

General construction practices would take wildlife into consideration. For example, trenches left open over night would be provided with wildlife escape ramps, and one-seeded juniper and piñon pine removed during construction would be consolidated into slash piles no greater than 2 feet in height. These slash piles would be dispersed or otherwise removed from the general vicinity of construction and human activities and would help mitigate wildlife disturbance by providing habitat areas for smaller animals.

Should the power upgrade alternative (AGP1) be selected, then the FS and BLM would recommend the power line be constructed to be compatible with the current Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) “Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996” and FWS guidelines for protection of avian species from electrocution and line strike.

**Operation Phase.** The vegetation that is re-established during the construction period would continue to serve as a mitigation measure during project operation. To ensure long-term revegetation success, a monitoring program would be conducted to assess revegetation success and evaluate recolonization by nonnative invasive plant species. Details of the monitoring effort would be specified in the implementation plan.

The previously presented water resource mitigations for construction and operational effects would also serve to avoid adverse effects to aquatic fauna during very low flow conditions. The FS/BLM, in fulfillment of the NEPA process, is consulting with the FWS to develop a biological assessment. The biological assessment includes a discussion of potential impacts to the flora and fauna, and mitigation measures, including an operations plan that addresses flow conditions (see the discussion on “Water Operations”).

Implementation of the soil protection mitigations and revegetation program would serve to minimize the long-term effects to wildlife habitat.

## Cultural Resources

**Construction Phase.** Effects to cultural resources would be mitigated through implementation of the following practices. Archeological sites would be avoided where possible. Fencing would be placed around sites near the construction area, but not subject to direct affect, to protect them from inadvertent intrusion by construction equipment and personnel. Additionally, a qualified archeological monitor would be present during all construction excavation and surface modifications within known and potential site areas. If previously unknown subsurface cultural deposits are discovered, construction activities in the area would halt and the agency would determine appropriate treatment in consultation with the SHPO. Archeological sites that could not be avoided during construction would have archeological testing or data recovery efforts conducted prior to construction. Subsurface sites discovered during construction activities would also undergo testing or data recovery treatment. Archeological data recovery would be conducted in compliance with a formal data recovery plan approved by the involved agencies and the SHPO. Standard erosion control measures would be in effect during construction activities (see mitigation measures for the “Soils” section that follows). All workers conducting construction activities would be educated regarding cultural resources in the project area, appropriate avoidance measures, and associated restrictions per Federal statutes.

**Operation Phase.** In addition to the measures implemented during the construction phase, interpretive signage that explains the history of the Buckman area, through text and pictures, would be offered to Los Alamos County for placement at the White Rock Overlook Park viewing platform.

## Recreational Resources

**Construction Phase.** The Buckman area would not be closed to public access during construction. Therefore, the following mitigations would be implemented to ensure public safety. Alternative routes or flagmen would be used to allow safe passage through the construction area. At the entrance to Buckman Road, project information would be provided to the general public through signs or an information kiosk. This information would add to traffic safety by informing the public and nonproject workers of construction events, potential to encounter large construction vehicles on the roadway, and potential travel delays along Buckman Road.

**Operation Phase.** Under Alternative SF2, where the coarse river sediment would be trucked out and disposed of at an offsite facility, Buckman Road users would be notified via signage that they could encounter truck traffic on Buckman Road and experience river access delays.

## Scenic Resources

**Construction Phase.** Visual effects would be mitigated through implementation of a number of measures that would be specified in the implementation plan, including: (1) selecting color and texture of buildings surfaces and roofing materials to complement or match the surrounding native soils or vegetation; (2) siting and design of buildings to take advantage of terrain, where feasible, to screen from view; (3) using chain link fences color-bonded to match the predominant natural colors in the area (i.e., brown) and reduce reflectivity of metal; (4) undulating edges of sediment ponds or other measures to break up rectilinear lines that do not match the natural surroundings; (5) coloring concrete in the diversion structure and that used for dip sections along Buckman Road to match the surrounding area, blend in better and reflect less light; and (6)

rehabilitating areas temporarily disturbed by construction or road improvements to return to natural conditions.

**Operation Phase.** Measures implemented during the construction phase would continue to mitigate visual impacts during the operation phase.

## **Geology and Soils**

**Construction Phase.** Erosion control measures would be designed in compliance with the requirements for preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Implementation of the SWPPP would mitigate the potential effects of construction activities. These measures would be designed to minimize or avoid the loss of soil, prevent the establishment or exacerbation of rill and gullies, and potential water quality deterioration from sheet erosion that could result from construction and roadway runoff. Examples of construction mitigation measures would be: limiting disturbance of an area until it is necessary for construction to proceed; minimizing the area of vegetation removal; using silt fences and straw bales to temporarily control runoff; and covering or stabilizing construction scarred areas as soon as practical.

Trees—one-seeded juniper and piñon pine—that are removed during construction would be chipped and spread throughout the construction disturbance areas to protect and minimize soil loss. The techniques used would consist of mulching and/or a lop and scatter of larger diameter material such as branches and tree trunks to prevent or minimize sheet erosion.

These soil mitigation measures could be implemented anywhere within the project area analyzed for potential environmental effects.

**Operation Phase.** Implementation of a revegetation program (addressed in the “Biological Resources” mitigation section that follows) would serve to further mitigate soil loss for the duration of the operations phase of the project.

## **Permits Required for Project Implementation**

Prior to the start of construction of the diversion structure, several temporary and permanent permits must be obtained. These include:

### **Federal**

- USDA Forest Service – Special use permit for construction and operation of diversion structure
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management – ROW permit (permanent facilities including pipeline and booster stations)
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management – Temporary use permit (for land use during construction outside the permanent ROW)
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management – Review and revision of existing City lease at MRC for 25-acre WTP site
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Section 404 permits (including Section 10 Navigable Waters, Section 401 Water Quality Certification, etc.)

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for settled sand return line from sediment facility to the Rio Grande
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI – Develop and implement a stormwater pollution prevention plan and file a Notice of Intent to comply with Stormwater Construction General NPDES Permit for construction of diversion and near-river facilities, pipelines, booster stations, water treatment plants, and treated water distribution piping.

### **State**

- Office of the State Engineer – Application for Permit to Divert Surface Waters for San Juan-Chama Water (City and County) and to Change Place and Purpose of Use and Point of Diversion for Native Rio Grande Waters (County and Las Campanas).
- Environment Department – Certification of Federal NPDES discharge permit
- Environment Department – Application for Approval of Construction or Modification of Existing Public Water Supply System – includes review of preliminary engineering report and plans and specifications
- Environmental Department – Liquid waste disposal permits
- Land Use Office – ROW permit for facilities on State lands
- Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division – Section 106 Historic Preservation Compliance
- Highway and Transportation Department – Right-of-way permit for construction of utilities along highways

### **Local**

- Santa Fe County – Land Development Permit (includes flood plain development analysis/permit by County and building permit review by State CID and State fire marshal)
- City of Santa Fe – Wastewater discharge permit for water treatment plant residuals to the City sanitary sewer system.
- City of Santa Fe – Approved development plan
- City of Santa Fe – Building permit, grading permit, and utilities permit
- City of Santa Fe – Noise permit (only if any construction work in the City is to be performed outside the hours of 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.)
- Temporary (construction) and permanent easements or ROWs for land ownerships not listed above (e.g., railroads, private)

## Comparison of Alternatives

A summary and comparison of the environmental consequences of No Action, the Proposed Action and the alternatives is provided in Table 8.

**Table 8. Comparison of the direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Action and its alternatives.**

No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
<b>Land Tenure and Use</b>				
There would be no effects to land tenure and use.	Fifty-nine acres would be permanently affected due to improvements to Buckman Road, construction of the diversion structure, sediment facility booster stations, water treatment plants, and associated infrastructure. Special use and ROW permits would need to be issued. Construction and operation of the proposed new PNM substation near the MRC WTP would remove 2 acres of grazing land from one grazing lease resulting in a slight effect. However, because the proposed facilities are approved under existing management plans and agreements, and most of the land disturbance would occur along existing utility corridors where current land use is similar to the proposed land use, there would be minimal effects to land tenure and use under the Proposed Action.	Alternatives SF1 and SF2 would have different locations of disturbance near the river. In addition, Alternative SF1 would require a new pipeline corridor of less than 1,500 feet for the return flow pipeline requiring about 3 additional acres of disturbance. Otherwise, effects would be similar to the Proposed Action.	Alternative RWP1 would reduce disturbance of land because only one trench would be excavated instead of two. Alternative TWP1 would affect 17 acres, which is nearly the same as the Proposed Action and would result in a new ROW. Alternative TWP2 would affect 20 acres with a portion of the acreage (0.7 acre) resulting in a new utility corridor on BLM land. Alternative TWP3 would affect 27 acres along an existing corridor and would have no effect on land tenure and use. Any treated water pipeline on BLM land would require ROWs.	The effect on land tenure and use would be the same as for the Proposed Action for Alternative AGP1. No effects to grazing would result from construction and operation of the new substation along Caja del Rio Road. Approximately 1.8 additional acres (based on a 30-foot-wide corridor) of land would be disturbed for the power line connection between the existing power source and the MRC WTP; however, the power line would be located within an existing ROW and, therefore, would not change land tenure and use.
<b>Water Resources</b>				
<b>Streamflow</b>				
Continued depletions of the aquifer would occur in the Buckman area and in flows of the Rio Grande and its tributaries.	Temporary, localized disturbance of streamflow currents would occur during the construction phase. This disturbance would include some redirection of flow vectors by the temporary cofferdam structure. During operation, some localized changes in streamflow currents would occur near the diversion	For Alternative SF1, the effects on streamflow would be the same as for the Proposed Action. For Alternative SF2, the maximum diversion would be reduced from 32 cfs to 28.2 cfs; however, since there would be no	The effects on streamflow would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on streamflow would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.



No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
<p>The City would continue to be required to offset depletions with releases of San Juan-Chama water into the Rio Grande and by retiring native water rights owned by the City in the two tributaries and the Rio Grande.</p>	<p>structure. The changes are not expected to affect the flow regime in the river. Generally, with the project in place, the effect on average flows in the Rio Grande would be less than 1 percent. Of that 1 percent effect, at least two-thirds would be associated with diversion of water imported to the Rio Grande from the inter-basin San Juan-Chama Project. Streamflow upstream of the diversion would be enhanced by about 4.2 cfs on average through releases of San Juan-Chama Project water.</p>	<p>return flow for sand re-injection, the net diversion would still be 28.2 cfs under peak withdrawal conditions. Therefore, the effects on streamflow would be nearly identical to those for the Proposed Action.</p>		

**Sediment Transport and Deposition**

<p>There would be no effects to sediment transport and deposition.</p>	<p>The diversion would create a slight reduction in sediment carrying capacity in the river immediately downstream of the diversion. That factor coupled with the re-injection of the sand fraction would likely lead to some sediment deposition immediately downstream of the diversion, particularly during lower flow events in the river. Hydraulic calculations suggest that this deposition would have an average thickness of less than an inch. The deposition is expected to be localized, as equilibrium flow conditions would be quickly re-established further downstream. The localized deposition would likely be washed away during high flow conditions in the Rio Grande. The sediment deposition would not be noticeable in a river system where sediment discharge rates vary naturally by a factor of 10 to 100 or more</p>	<p>For Alternative SF1, the effects on sediment transport and deposition would be the same as for the Proposed Action. For Alternative SF2, there would be no return flow for sand re-injection; therefore, the effects on sedimentation would be slightly less than for the Proposed Action. However, there would still be some reduction of carrying capacity for sediment transport. Therefore, there would likely still be some localized sediment deposits immediately downstream of the diversion. These deposits would likely be smaller than those associated with the</p>	<p>The effects on sediment transport and deposition would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on sediment transport and deposition would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>
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No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
	over the course of a single year and sediment bed and bank conditions are continually changing by the natural processes of flowing water.	Proposed Action, and not noticeable.		

**Surface Water Quality**

There would be no effects to water quality.	Some minor temporary increases to turbidity in the Rio Grande would be expected during construction activities, primarily in the 1- to 2-week period when the cofferdam is placed and a similar period of time when it is removed. Turbidity is caused primarily by suspended silts and clays, organic material and dissolved solids. Operation of the diversion structure is not expected to affect these parameters or any other water quality parameters.	The effects on surface water quality would be the same as for the Proposed Action for either sediment facility alternative.	The effects on surface water quality would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on surface water quality would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
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**Water Use and Water Rights**

The near-term demand for water in the region would not be satisfied by the current supply system. The applicants would seek other water rights and other methods for meeting the projected demand.	The project is expected to have a beneficial effect on water use in the service area. The applicants would be able to better manage the available water supplies with less reliance on depleted ground water aquifers. During periods of low flow in the river, ground water sources would still be available to supplement diverted flows within the authorized water rights available to each of the applicants. The Proposed Action would indirectly affect water rights in that the County would be required to acquire water rights in order to fully use the diversion and Las Campanas would be required to extend their leased rights.	The effects on water use and water rights would be the same as for the Proposed Action for both sediment facility alternatives.	The effects on water use and water rights would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on water use and water rights would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
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No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
<b>Flood Plains and Flooding</b>				
There would be no effects to flood plains and flooding.	The diversion structure would be constructed within the area designated as Flood Zone C on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Flood Insurance Rate Map. This indicates that the area has a 1 percent probability of being flooded in any given year. Construction of the diversion would not cause constriction of flows that would exacerbate the flood potential. The structure would be designed to be periodically submerged by high flows in the river.	The effects on flood plains and flooding would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.	The effects on flood plains and flooding would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on flood plains and flooding would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
<b>Ground Water</b>				
There would be continued reliance on and depletion of the aquifer from pumping the Buckman Well Field.	Less reliance on ground water for local water supplies would have a beneficial effect on local ground water resources. Ground water models predict that the depressed ground water levels near the Buckman diversion site would rebound over a time period of several decades, possibly as much as 100 feet in some areas. The Proposed Action would not cause any changes to ground water quality.	The effects on ground water would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.	The effects on ground water would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on ground water would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
<b>Biological Resources</b>				
<b>Terrestrial Communities – Plant Communities</b>				
There would be no effects to plant communities.	Improvements to Buckman Road, construction of the intake structure, booster stations, and water treatment plants would result in the permanent loss of approximately 59 acres of vegetation. Additionally, modification or clearing of vegetation for facility work area construction and preparation of the pipeline corridors would temporarily	Alternatives SF1 and SF2 would have different locations of disturbance near the river. The sediment return line for Alternative SF1 would be longer compared to the Proposed Action resulting in the short-term disturbance of	Alternative TWP1 effects are similar to the Proposed Action.  Alternative TWP2 would affect approximately 3 acres, more than the Proposed Action.  Alternative TWP3 would require approximately 10	Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action; however, the length of the power line segment to connect the MRC WTP to the existing power source would be approximately twice as long.

No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
	<p>affect an additional 247 acres. For these areas temporarily disturbed, the vegetation would be re-established through the native plant revegetation program and, therefore, represents a potential short-term affect.</p>	<p>approximately 3 additional acres.</p>	<p>acres more than the Proposed Action. However, construction would occur entirely in existing utility corridors.</p> <p>Development of a new corridor (Alternative TWP1 and TWP2) could encourage changes to and increased recreation use in the area and subsequent degradation to plant communities.</p>	<p>During construction, short-term disturbance of approximately 1.8 additional acres (using a 30-foot corridor width) of terrestrial plant habitat would occur due to the additional one-half mile power line segment. Once in place, the disturbed terrain would be able to recover to existing conditions. Between Booster Station 2/2A and the river, disturbance would be similar to the Proposed Action.</p>

**Terrestrial Communities - Wildlife**

<p>There would be no effects to wildlife populations or habitat.</p>	<p>Approximately 308 acres of wildlife habitat would likely be temporarily or permanently affected during construction. Two hundred seventy-nine acres of construction-affected habitat would be allowed to revert back to their previous condition. During site clearing activities, highly mobile wildlife species or wildlife species with large home ranges (such as deer and birds) would be able to relocate to adjacent undeveloped areas. For less mobile species (reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals), direct mortality could occur during the actual construction event or ultimately result from habitat alteration. These effects would be minor given the amount of habitat affected compared to available habitat. No species population would be adversely affected.</p>	<p>The Alternative SF1 sediment return line would be longer, resulting in the short-term disturbance of approximately 3 additional acres of wildlife habitat.</p> <p>Short-term wildlife effects from construction of a return pipeline would be avoided under Alternative SF2.</p> <p>Alternative SF2 would result in episodic and increased truck traffic that could result in short-term wildlife avoidance of the Buckman Road corridor. However, the effects would be negligible and of short duration as wildlife</p>	<p>Alternative TWP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Alternative TWP2 would affect approximately 3 acres more wildlife habitat than the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Alternative TWP3 would require approximately 10 acres more than the Proposed Action. However, construction would occur entirely in existing utility line ROW.</p> <p>Development of a new corridor (Alternative TWP1 and TWP2) could encourage changes to and increased recreation use in the area and subsequent</p>	<p>Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade; however, the length of the power line segment to connect the MRC WTP to the existing power source would be approximately twice as long. During construction, short-term disturbance of approximately 1.8 additional acres (using a 30-foot corridor width) of wildlife habitat would occur due to the additional one-half mile power line segment. Once in place, the power lines would provide additional raptor perch sites.</p>
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No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
	<p>The 59 acres fenced or converted to facilities, Buckman Road improvements, and other infrastructure would be permanently lost as potential predator hunting habitat and foraging or hiding cover for other wildlife species. There would be a concurrent decrease in quality of the habitat immediately adjacent to the facilities due to increased noise levels, traffic, lights, and other human activity. The adjacent habitat also would experience a loss of quality from the reduction in size, segmentation of the habitat, and restriction on mobility for some species. These effects would be minor and no species population would be adversely affected.</p>	<p>populations would habituate to changes in road traffic.</p>	<p>degradation to wildlife habitat.</p>	<p>Between Booster Station 2/2A and the river, overhead power lines would provide additional raptor perch sites.</p>

**Aquatic Communities**

<p>There would be no effects to aquatic communities or species populations.</p>	<p>During cofferdam construction and demolition, localized increases in turbidity would occur. Aquatic fauna in the area would be temporarily affected during these activities. Aquatic fauna would be expected to temporarily vacate the locality of increased turbidity. Given the limited area affected, no aquatic species' population is expected to be permanently affected.</p> <p>There could be limited, localized impacts from sediment returned to the river. However, the Rio Grande normally carries a very high sediment load, and the return of a small fraction of the sediment contained in the diverted water would likely have a</p>	<p>Alternative SF1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Under Alternative SF2 there would be no return of sediment to the Rio Grande. The potential effects identified for sediment return consequences under the Proposed Action would not occur.</p>	<p>The effects on aquatic communities would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on aquatic communities would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>
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No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
	<p>very small impact on downstream fish or invertebrate communities. The very localized impacts to aquatic habitat would have no measurable impact to fish or macroinvertebrate communities in the immediate project area.</p>			

**Special Status Species**

<p>There would be no effects to special status species or their habitats.</p>	<p>A project-specific search of the New Mexico Natural Heritage Program database did not reveal any records of currently listed special status species in the propose project area. Sixteen special status species were identified that have potential occurrence or habitat within the construction areas. Three species (Flathead chub, Loggerhead shrike, Gunnison’s prairie dog) were observed in close proximity to the project construction boundaries. Project construction and operations are not expected to adversely affect any population of a special status species.</p> <p>One species, Rio Grande silvery minnow, while not occurring in the area, could experience an effect from the proposed diversion of native Rio Grande water. However, the Buckman Project’s commitment to use native flows during nonpeak times and the design of the Buckman water diversion structure to not allow water diversion at flows of about 150 cfs or less, coupled with specific measures developed during consultation with FWS, would serve to mitigate an adverse effect to the silvery minnow population.</p>	<p>The effects on special status species would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on special status species would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on special status species would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>
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No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
<b>Cultural Resources</b>				
<b>Historic Properties</b>				
<p>There would be no effects on historic properties.</p>	<p>The historic town of Buckman and the Denver and Rio Grande railroad grade would be physically disturbed by the sediment facility, Booster Station 1A, Buckman Road improvements, raw water pipeline, return flow pipeline, gas pipeline, and power line construction. Two additional sites would be disturbed by the raw water pipeline and power line south of Buckman. Three sites would be disturbed by the treated water pipeline. The existence of cultural resources within the project area for the above ground power line near the MRC WTP is currently unknown. However, it is likely that construction impacts to resources could be avoided through careful placement of structures away from any identified resources. Visual and audible effects to the townsite of Buckman would occur. Vandalism, illegal artifact collecting, and inadvertent harm to all sites could occur. There has been no response by Indian tribes to requests for consultation regarding the presence of traditional cultural properties and sacred sites in the project area.</p>	<p>Alternative SF1 would remove the disturbance to the Buckman townsite caused by the Proposed Action’s sediment facility and Booster Station 1A. Alternative SF1 would also have less of a visual and audible effect on Buckman.</p> <p>Alternative SF2 would remove the disturbance to the Buckman townsite caused by the Proposed Action’s sediment facility, Booster Station 1A, and the return flow pipeline.</p> <p>Alternative SF2 would have less of a visual and audible effect on Buckman than the Proposed Action, but more of an effect than Alternative SF1 due to the presence of haul trucks nearby.</p>	<p>Alternative RWP1 would reduce the extent of physical disturbance to the Buckman townsite and the railroad grade.</p> <p>Alternative TWP1 would affect one site.</p> <p>Alternative TWP2 would affect no sites.</p> <p>Alternative TWP3 would cross the railroad grade four times.</p>	<p>The existence of cultural resources along the approximately 1-mile power line and the substation near Caja Del Rio Road is currently unknown. However, for the power line, it is likely that construction impacts to resources could be avoided through careful placement of structures away from any identified resources. The above ground power line between the Buckman substation and the river would result in physical disturbance of the Buckman townsite, but the extent of disturbance would be greatly reduced from the Proposed Action. Visual effects to the Buckman townsite from the above ground power line would be greater than for the Proposed Action.</p>
<b>Indian Trust Assets</b>				
<p>Continued depletions of the aquifer would occur in the Buckman area and in the flows of</p>	<p>The facilities at the Buckman townsite would be visible from San Ildefonso lands. San Ildefonso Pueblo representatives have not expressed opposition to the Proposed Action during discussions with BLM and</p>	<p>The effects on Indian Trust Assets would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on Indian Trust Assets would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on Indian trust assets would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>

No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
the Rio Grande and its tributaries, which could adversely affect the water resources of pueblos within the basin.	FS personnel. There would be no adverse effects to Indian Trust Assets. Less reliance on ground water for local water supplies could have a beneficial effect on the ground water and surface water resources of pueblos within the basin.			

**Recreation Resources and Traffic**

There would be no effects to recreational resources.	<p>Access to recreational resources would be affected through delays and small detours during construction.</p> <p>Recreation opportunities within the proposed project region would not change. However, with the improvement of Buckman Road, additional recreational users may access the area.</p>	<p>Alternative SF1 would have the same effects as the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Under Alternative SF2, use of the road by heavy truck traffic could result in delays in access.</p>	The effects on recreation resources would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on recreation resources would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
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**Traffic**

There would be no effects to traffic.	<p>During construction activities, traffic would be affected by delays and increased use of Buckman Road by construction related vehicles.</p> <p>Improvements to Buckman Road as part of the Proposed Action would affect to a small degree the recreation experience on both BLM and FS lands. On the SPNM BLM lands and National Forest System lands along Buckman Road, the Access and Naturalness ROS descriptors would be affected. Due to road improvements and increased recreational use of the area, traffic is expected to increase along Buckman Road. This could result in cumulative affects to the</p>	<p>Alternative SF1 would have the same effects as the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Under Alternative SF2, traffic would be further increased along Buckman Road from use by haul trucks to carry sediment to the landfill.</p>	The effects on traffic would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on traffic would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
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No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
	<p>Social Encounters, Visitor Impacts, and Visitor Management descriptors as well. Traffic would also increase due to use of the road by workers accessing the new facilities for operation and maintenance. Minor traffic increases would occur on roadways to the MRC.</p>			
<b>Scenic Resources</b>				
<p>There would be no effects to scenic resources.</p>	<p>Construction activities would be noticeable by site users and visitors to the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform. These effects would be short term.</p> <p>The diversion structure and associated infrastructure would be within the foreground view of river users (boaters) and site visitors and could be seen at a distance from the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform. After vegetation is re-established, the facility would not be readily apparent to the site visitor or viewshed observers at White Rock Overlook Park. Boaters would be aware of the structure as they proceed past but due to the design it would be compatible with the river environment and not introduce a highly discordant element into the riverscape.</p> <p>Booster Station 1A and the sediment facility would be apparent to the casual site user and viewed from White Rock Overlook. However, construction of these facilities at the townsite of Buckman using historical architecture that is compatible with the landscape character would maintain the historical and cultural context. Buried power lines from the proposed diversion intake site to Booster Station 2A would</p>	<p>Alternatives SF1 and SF2 would be substantially out of the White Rock Overlook viewshed and the facilities would not be visible to Rio Grande boaters or other visitors to the river front area. Thus, effects to visual resources would be greatly reduced.</p> <p>Alternative SF2 would require trucking out the sediment and require two sediment storage ponds. Drying sediment would be a different color than the surrounding environment and would be noticeable from some higher elevation viewing locations (i.e., Sagebrush Flats). Buckman Road would have increased truck traffic that would be intrusive to the natural environment and noticeable to the casual viewer.</p>	<p>Alternative TWP1 would require construction and operation of the treated water return line in a new utility corridor along BLM and Las Campanas lands.</p> <p>Alternative TWP2 would install the treated water return line back along the Dead Dog Well corridor and then cut east in a new utility corridor on BLM land. Alternative TWP3 would use existing utility corridors. Any new treated water pipeline alignment on BLM land would require a ROW.</p> <p>Construction and establishment of a new pipeline corridor (Alternatives TWP1 and TWP2) would affect the local viewshed by introducing a straight line swathe and bare ground. Even with revegetation, the new corridor would be noticeable in the short term until vegetation is re-established. Development of a new corridor could encourage changes to</p>	<p>Alternative AGP1 would require upgrade of the existing Buckman transformer station and construction and operation of a new substation approximately 1 mile southeast of the MRC WTP, adjacent to an existing power line along Caja del Rio Road. The substation would be in the viewshed of some houses present along Caja del Rio Road. Under AGP1a, an existing buried power line would be used to supply power from the new substation to the MRC WTP. Therefore, transmission lines under AGP1a would not be apparent to visitors and residents along Caja Del Rio Road. Under AGP1b, overhead power lines from the proposed diversion intake site to Booster Station 2A would be apparent to site visitors and introduce a discordant visual element into the landscape.</p>

No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
	<p>not affect scenic resources.</p> <p>Buckman Road improvements would make the roadway slightly more noticeable to the casual viewer due primarily to the increased reflectivity, curve straightening, and color difference of the surfacing material.</p> <p>Generally, existing utility corridors and booster station locations would be used which would serve to minimize impacts to the scenic environment. Once plants are re-established, the pipeline corridors would blend in with existing conditions. Booster station architecture that blends into the surrounding landscape would serve to minimize the visual effect of additional structures.</p> <p>The proposed MRC WTP would be designed to blend into the surrounding landscape. Thus, it would not be readily evident to a distant viewer after successful vegetation re-establishment. The level of change to the foreground-middleground perspective would be moderate due to the extent and prominence of the water treatment facilities and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>The proposed above ground power line to the MRC and the proposed power substation at the MRC would have visual effects as shown in Figure 21. In addition, some visual effects may occur as a result of upgrades to the exiting Buckman power substation.</p>		<p>and increased recreation use in the area and subsequent degradation to the natural viewshed.</p> <p>RWP1 would reduce the extent of physical disturbance from Booster Station 1A to Booster Station 2A.</p>	

No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
<b>Noise</b>				
<p>There would be no effects to noise levels.</p>	<p>Noise levels during construction would be increased, but would be localized and temporary.</p> <p>Post construction, minor increases to ambient noise levels would occur in the immediate vicinity of the diversion facility, sediment facility, booster stations, and water treatment plants. Noise levels would attenuate rapidly with distance away from the facilities.</p>	<p>Under Alternatives SF1 and SF2, locating the sediment facility away from the river would reduce noise levels near the river.</p> <p>Alternative SF2 would cause more truck traffic noise on Buckman Road, and more noise at the sediment facility from sand removal.</p>	<p>Under Alternative RWP1, noise effects would be similar to the Proposed Action. During construction, all of the TWP alternatives would have lesser noise effects than the Proposed Action since they are located farther from the Las Campanas subdivision.</p>	<p>The effects on noise would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>
<b>Air Quality</b>				
<p>There would be no effects to air quality.</p>	<p>During construction, there would be minor increases in airborne particulate matter (fugitive dust) and emissions generated from construction activities, equipment, and vehicle traffic. During operations, some minor increases to vehicle emissions would occur from increased maintenance and recreational traffic, but dust would be reduced by road improvements.</p>	<p>For Alternative SF1, the effects on air quality would be similar to those for the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Alternative SF2 would have greater increases of dust and emissions due to increased truck traffic on Buckman Road.</p>	<p>Under Alternative RWP1, air quality effects would be similar to the Proposed Action.</p> <p>During construction, all of the TWP alternatives would have lesser air quality effects than the Proposed Action since they are located farther from the Las Campanas subdivision.</p>	<p>The effects on air quality would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>
<b>Geology and Soils</b>				
<p>There would be no effects to geology and soils.</p>	<p>During construction, lay down and equipment staging areas, proposed improvement sections to Buckman Road, and construction ROWs would be cleared. Site clearing activities would result in localized soil disturbance and/or removal.</p>	<p>The effects on geology and soils would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on geology and soils would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on geology and soils would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>

No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
<b>Social and Economic Resources</b>				
<b>Population and Housing, Growth and Dynamics</b>				
Population growth and dynamics as well as housing growth would be constrained.	The project is designed to meet needs through 2010; therefore, future growth would still be moderately to tightly limited because of water availability.	The effects on population growth and housing would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.	The effects on population growth and housing would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on population and housing, growth and dynamics would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
<b>Ways of Life</b>				
Ways of life would be affected due to limited water resources.	Ways of life would be affected similarly to No Action, but with less severe changes.	The effects on ways of life would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.	The effects on ways of life would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on ways of life would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
<b>Employment/Unemployment</b>				
Construction and tourist-oriented industries would lose jobs.	Employment is more likely to be stable during the planning period should the Proposed Action go forth. There would be minor but beneficial employment from construction and operation of the proposed project.	The effects on employment/unemployment would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.	The effects on employment/unemployment would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on employment/unemployment would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.
<b>Revenue Base</b>				
Gross receipts tax from reduced housing starts would decrease and property tax revenues would increase.	The revenue base would be similar to but less severe than the No Action Alternative.	The effects on revenue base would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.	The effects on revenue base would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.	The effects on revenue base would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.

No Action	Proposed Action	Sediment Facility Alternatives	Pipeline Alternatives	Power Upgrade Alternative
<b>Environmental Justice</b>				
<p>Santa Fe County does not meet the definition under EO 12898 for a low-income population.</p>	<p>Environmental justice issues would be similar as the No Action Alternative.</p>	<p>The effects on environmental justice would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action for all sediment facility alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on environmental justice would be the same as for the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.</p>	<p>The effects on environmental justice communities would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.</p>



# Chapter 3 • Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This chapter describes the existing conditions and environmental effects associated with the Proposed Action and alternatives, including the No Action Alternative. There are 13 resource sections. Each section begins by describing the affected environment, which is then followed by an assessment of the expected consequences from implementing the Proposed Action and alternatives. Each section summarizes some of the more detailed information from the technical analysis reports prepared for this project in order to make the information readily understood and reduce the length of this EIS. The individual analysis reports are in the project record and available for public review. Where there are differences between the information contained in the analysis reports and the information in this EIS, the EIS takes precedence. The EIS was reviewed and edited by various BLM, FS, and consultants several times throughout the interdisciplinary process after the original reports were written.

## Considerations for Cumulative Effects

Discussions of cumulative effects for each resource are provided at the end of each resource section. Evidence is increasing that serious environmental effects can result not just from the direct effects of a particular project, but from the combination of individually minor effects of multiple projects over time. Some authorities contend that most environmental effects should be seen as cumulative because almost all systems have already been modified, even degraded by humans (CEQ 1997).

The CEQ regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act define cumulative effects as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such actions” (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1508.7). The regulations further explain “cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” The cumulative effects analysis presented in each resource section is based on the potential effects of the Buckman Project added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions and their effects in the regions of influence for each resource category.

Past and present land use activities help define the existing conditions for each resource and are, therefore, reflected in the affected environment sections. Past projects that have most noticeably changed the characteristics of the river and river resources in the project area include the following:

- El Vado Dam and Reservoir on the Rio Chama was constructed in 1934 and 1935 by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) and is operated by agreement with Reclamation. Native waters stored and then released from El Vado are subject to provisions of the Rio Grande Compact. Angostura Diversion Dam, Isleta Diversion, and San Acacia Diversion Dam were also components of the Middle Rio Grande Project.
- The San Juan-Chama Project was authorized in 1962 by Public Law 84-485 as a participating project of the Colorado River Storage Project. The San Juan-Chama Project consists of facilities that divert water from the San Juan Basin (Colorado River Basin) in southern Colorado through 26 miles of tunnels beneath the Continental Divide to Willow Creek, a tributary of the Rio Chama in the Rio Grande Basin, in New Mexico.

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed construction of Abiquiu Dam and Reservoir in 1963 and Cochiti Dam in 1970. Both dams influence the characteristics of the Rio Grande.
- The Supplemental Well Project added five new wells in the City of Santa Fe's Buckman Well Field. The well field consists of the original eight wells, plus a ninth that was brought online in April 2003, and four others that were added in late 2003.
- The Buckman area has been modified due to the expansion of the City of Santa Fe, housing, construction, road development, and the demand from an increasing population for more recreational opportunities.
- The City has negotiated the lease of 3,000 ac-ft/yr of San Juan-Chama Project water from the Jicarilla Apache Nation for an approximately 50-year period ending in 2057. That lease involves the release of Jicarilla Apache Nation water from Heron Reservoir for use within the City's Water Utility Service System or for regulatory compliance associated with the City's Water Utility Service System, including pumping offsets.
- PNM's Project Power received authorization from BLM to upgrade the high-voltage electric transmission system that serves Santa Fe and Las Vegas and preserve electric reliability for area customers past 2004. BLM issued a Record of Decision in 2004 authorizing a route on BLM lands for the system upgrade. Additional NEPA assessments will be conducted by BLM to review and authorize PNM's applications to connect the existing service lines to the proposed upgrade, the addition of a fiber optic cable and widening of the right-of-way for the existing routes across BLM lands.

Examples of foreseeable future projects are listed below:

- The City of Albuquerque is constructing a diversion for as much as 94,000 ac-ft/yr (47,000 ac-ft/yr of San Juan-Chama water and 47,000 ac-ft/yr of native Rio Grande water) to fully consume their San Juan-Chama water, with the native Rio Grande water returned after treatment at the Southside Water Reclamation Plant. This project includes: construction and operation of a surface WTP to provide potable water for municipal and industrial use; construction of transmission pipelines to convey potable surface water to the city's water service area; continued use of ground water pumped from city wells during periods of drought and to meet peak demands; development of a program to demonstrate and implement aquifer storage and recovery technologies at appropriate city well fields; and use of vested and native surface water rights to offset pumping effects on river flows. A DEIS was published in June 2002 followed by a final EIS on March 5, 2004 and ROD on June 1, 2004.
- The City of Española has proposed a Drinking Water Project that would entail the diversion of 1,000 ac-ft/yr of San Juan-Chama water and approximately 1,000 ac-ft/yr of native water. The diversion would be built on city owned property just north of the city and a portion of the construction work would include upgrades to Los Vigiles Ditch north to the Rio Grande. The San Juan-Chama water would be consumed and the native water would re-enter the Rio Grande at the wastewater treatment plant outfall. An environmental assessment is currently under preparation.
- Los Alamos and the Pueblo of San Ildefonso are considering diverting Rio Grande water, and there may be other projects similar to the Buckman Project that would divert San Juan-Chama and native waters from the Rio Grande. San Ildefonso installed a single unit infiltration collector well as a pilot project in 2001.



- There is an ongoing cooperative effort between several agencies to identify, fund, implement, and monitor river restoration projects.
- Projects within the Buckman area could include granting of access ROWs for private inholdings within BLM lands, and increased housing development.
- Other projects may be undertaken related to habitat in the Rio Grande for the silvery minnow, downstream of Cochiti Reservoir.
- The City and County are establishing relationships with other entities responsible for the use and management of the river and are active participants in workgroups and restoration activities, both planned and ongoing.
- Future changes in the Rio Grande could also be related to litigation settlement agreements, collaborative programs, and future legislation. These may include a settlement on the Aamodt et al. litigation that could provide for resolution of water rights in accordance with certain requirements. A settlement of this case could potentially result in the development of a regional water system to serve the Pojoaque Basin that would reduce the impact of domestic wells on the ground water, as well as increase reliance on surface water flows.

## **Land Tenure and Use**

### **Affected Environment**

The area of potential effect for land tenure and use is generally defined as the Buckman and Dead Dog Leg corridors, as well as adjacent lands that are similar in quality and usage to the project area lands. Land tenure and use was evaluated along the Buckman Road/Dead Dog Leg corridors where construction activities for the diversion facilities are proposed. The land for the City and County and Las Campanas has already been zoned for this use.

Within the area of potential effect, land is either administered, owned, or managed by eight different jurisdictions: FS, BLM, Las Campanas, City, County, State of New Mexico, New Mexico Department of Transportation, and private ownership of approximately 265 lots. From the bank of the Rio Grande to approximately 1 mile east of the riverbank, the land belongs to the Santa Fe National Forest administered by the FS. With the exception of a small portion of State land between Las Campanas and FS lands, for the next 17 miles, the land along the Buckman Road/Dead Dog Leg corridors is under BLM jurisdiction. Approximately 3 miles of pipeline corridor and the Las Campanas WTP would be located on property owned by Las Campanas. Within the project area, the FS's Santa Fe National Forest Plan and the BLM's Taos Resource Area's Resource Management Plan specify approved land uses on Federal lands. The City and County would apply for ROW permits with the State of New Mexico and the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department. Additionally, easements through private property must be secured. The County has jurisdiction to approve the pipeline ROW along most of Caja del Rio Road.

Indian Trust Assets (ITAs) are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individuals. Examples of possible trust assets include lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. The United States has a trust responsibility to protect rights reserved by or granted to Indian tribes or individual Indians. This trust responsibility requires Federal agencies to take appropriate actions when necessary to protect trust assets.

The nearest tribal lands belonging to San Ildefonso Pueblo are located directly across the Rio Grande from the proposed Buckman diversion structure and sediment facility ponds and well north of the associated roadway and pipeline corridors. Potential effects on ITAs would be positive effects on water available for pueblo use because of less reliance on ground water.

Land uses in the area are varied. Designated land uses include private ranches, timber harvesting for firewood and small wood products such as vigas, latillas, posts and poles, utility corridors and easements, water management (i.e., booster stations, drainages and flood control), rangeland/agriculture, and recreation/open space. The banks of the Rio Grande, within the proposed location for the diversion structure, were prehistorically and are currently used for hunting, fishing, and gathering activities.

The FS and BLM have established long-term cattle grazing allotments within and adjacent to the project area. Cattle movement and distribution are controlled throughout the area by fencing and use of cattle guards. Between Booster Stations 2 and 3, there is a small system of corral fences, associated cattle loading chute, and a small livestock well named Dead Dog Well. The Dead Dog Well location is the site of the only cattle gate on roadways within the project corridors. Grazing lands are characterized by the plant communities as described in the section, “Terrestrial Communities, Affected Environment” later in this chapter.

Currently, there are several existing ROWs issued along the Buckman Road/Dead Dog Leg corridor that include:

- Qwest buried fiber optic line;
- City of Santa Fe water wells, booster stations, surge tanks, and buried water pipelines;
- PNM buried natural gas pipelines; and
- Power lines (both 12.47 kV buried power lines and above ground 115 kV transmission lines).

These ROWs meander back and forth across Buckman Road and Dead Dog Leg Road as they traverse the terrain.

The City owns and operates the Buckman Well Field located near the terminus of Buckman Road on BLM and FS land. The lands where the wells are located are leased by the City from both the BLM and FS. The Buckman Wells, which divert a portion of the City and County’s San Juan-Chama contract water, pump piped water upslope along the Buckman corridor into the municipal supply system.

Booster Station 1 is located within the vicinity of the Buckman Well Field. Booster Stations 2, 3, and 4 are also along the corridor. Each of these stations pumps water from an adjacent surge tank to the next station’s tank southeast and upslope along the corridor. Booster Station 4 is located within Las Campanas. Water is delivered to Las Campanas at two points between Booster Stations 3 and 4. From Booster Station 4, water is pumped into the 10 million gallon tank where it is fluoridated, disinfected, and discharged into the City’s distribution system. At Dead Dog Well, a maintenance road along the Dead Dog Leg corridor continues south-southeast on BLM and State land between Las Campanas and FS lands. No improved roads intersect the Dead Dog Leg corridor, and usage of this road is light.

Buckman Road functions as a maintenance and recreational access road through the Buckman corridor. According to the Buckman Roadway Study Report (Tierra Lopezgarcia Group, 2004), Buckman Road is classified as a “local lane” according to the Santa Fe County Road ordinances which states “...A local lane, place or cul-de-sac serves 0 to 30 dwelling units or lots and carries an average daily traffic volume of 0 to 300 vehicles with two (2), ten (10) foot driving lanes with a minimum right-of-way of fifty (50) feet...” The road report also states that in accordance with AASHTO criteria, Buckman road could be classified as a “special purpose road.” Roads in this category are typically lightly traveled and operate at low speeds. Superelevation of horizontal curves would need to be carefully considered under this classification. No ROW has been issued for Buckman Road. Buckman Road is maintained by the County, and maintenance includes blading and contouring. There are no other improved roads that intersect the unimproved 9.2-mile segment. Unimproved roads exist which diverge from the main trunk of Buckman Road; however, these roads primarily serve as recreational access corridors to the surrounding hills. In some cases, these primitive roads and trails continue onto FS lands. Vehicle use on these roads within FS lands is illegal. The portion of Buckman Road that crosses FS lands is classified as a “Level 2” road, which means it is maintained for high clearance vehicles with passenger car use not intended. The improved segment of Buckman Road, which passes through Las Campanas, has several improved roads that primarily access residential developments around and within Las Campanas.

Prime farmland is defined as land being suitable for the production of any food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, and is designated by soil type (BOR/City of Albuquerque 2004). No designated prime or unique farmlands are identified within the Buckman Road/Dead Dog Leg corridors.

Land use activity levels along the Buckman corridor were determined based on traffic survey data collected between August 27 and October 7, 2002. On August 27 (Tuesday) and September 15 (Sunday), traffic surveys of vehicles and occupants on Buckman Road just north of Dead Dog Well were conducted. Observation data that was collected from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. included direction of travel, vehicle license plate state of origin, number of people in vehicle, purpose of visit, type of activity (hiking, biking, climbing, etc.), or maintenance/grazing allotment access, and general observations. On Tuesday, there were 22 vehicles with a total of 37 occupants. Twenty vehicle occupants were there for recreational purposes, and 17 people were on work assignments. On Sunday, there were 48 vehicles with 95 occupants, and only 4 people were there on work assignments. On September 9, 2002, a mechanical vehicle counter was buried within and across Buckman Road at a location just north of Dead Dog Well and extracted on October 7, 2002. During this time period the vehicle counter recorded the number of all vehicles using this stretch of Buckman Road. Average weekend use was 99 vehicles over a period of 5 weekends and 96 vehicles during the workweek (Monday through Friday) over a 4-week period (Tetra Tech 2002).

## **Environmental Consequences**

### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative would leave the land tenure in the Buckman Road/Dead Dog Leg corridors in its current condition. The corridors would continue to be utilized for the existing infrastructure and utilities ROW. Current land uses under the management of the FS, BLM, Las

Campanas, City and County of Santa Fe, New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, and private parties, would not be affected.

Because of the increased use of ground water in the Rio Grande and its tributaries, the No Action Alternative would continue to affect surface water and ground water (see sections below that discuss these resources in detail). With no action, ITAs related to water rights might, therefore, be affected by this continued reliance on ground water pumping. See discussion about the ITAs on page 87.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

**Construction Effects.** Construction would have no adverse effect to Indian Trust Assets. Construction would not affect the operations of existing infrastructure and utilities that occupy the Buckman Road/Dead Dog Leg corridors. However, disturbance of land (e.g., for digging of trenches to pipelines) adjacent to the existing ROW has the potential of causing short-term disruption to the normal maintenance of facilities in the corridors. The construction contractor would minimize such disruptions by having direct contacts with other utility operators and coordinating respective construction and maintenance activities. Buckman Road functions as a maintenance and recreational road through the Buckman corridor. The proposed improvement of this road as needed by the project would also result in temporary and short-term disruptions to vehicular traffic. These disruptions would be minimized by the use of normal traffic control devices and road bypasses where necessary. The treated water pipeline would be constructed mostly on Las Campanas private land and lands running beneath Las Campanas Drive. Thus, some private lands would require utility easements. Paving of Las Campanas Drive would occur prior to implementation of the Buckman Project. Additionally, construction of the pipeline beneath Las Campanas Drive would result in traffic disruption and require repaving of Las Campanas Drive. The north end of this pipeline would run across BLM land in a new ROW for a distance of a half mile.

Short-term disturbance to grazing lands and cattle distribution may occur within the project area due to construction activities. Prior to construction, all grazing permittees would be notified as to the construction schedule and type of construction activities to be conducted within their grazing allotment. Avoidance of undisturbed grazing lands would be the main construction strategy. While construction activity may occur during the scheduled grazing periods, activities would be primarily limited to existing rights-of-way, thus limiting impacts to surrounding grazing lands. Any fences, gates, or cattle guards damaged or removed during construction would be repaired or replaced as necessary to prevent cattle trespass onto adjacent lands.

The proposed construction of a new PNM substation in the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 22 under the Proposed Action will have a slight direct effect on grazing. The location of the proposed substation would effectively remove 2 acres of land from one grazing lease. The current grazing lease, on lands including the subject 2-acre substation site, is held by New Mexico State University. As a result of substation construction, New Mexico State University would effectively lose the use of 2 acres of grazing land held as part of the original grazing lease.

The FS's Forest Plan would require special use permits to include new facilities on its land should the Proposed Action go forward. BLM lands in the Buckman Road corridor are currently utilized for a booster station and raw water pipeline belonging to the Buckman Water Management Unit of the City's water well system. Additional booster stations and pipelines to be constructed under the Proposed Action would require a ROW from the BLM. Construction of a new pipeline in the

Dead Dog Leg corridor and a joint City and County WTP at the site of the City's MRC would occupy ROW land granted by the BLM. Las Campanas, a master planned real estate development, has already accounted for the location of the pipeline corridor and a WTP on its land. The City and County of Santa Fe land use requirements are governed by zoning ordinances and have existing utility ROWs. Each of these entities are signatories to a memorandum of understanding and have agreed to coordinate and work cooperatively regarding land use requirements. Construction of facilities would result in temporary as well as permanent disturbance of land. A total of 306 acres of land would be affected, of which 247 acres of land would be temporarily disturbed during construction and would be returned to its pre-construction condition with the area revegetated according to approved vegetation plans after construction is completed. Because the proposed facilities are approved under existing management plans and agreements, and most of the land disturbance would occur along existing utility corridors where current land use is similar to the proposed land use, there would be minimal effects to land tenure and use. Short-term disruptions to maintenance of existing utilities would be minimized through coordination between the construction contractor and the utility operators, thus there would be little affect to infrastructure or utilities.

**Operation Effects.** Preliminary estimates from PNM indicate that power loads on the existing electrical supply infrastructure near the proposed MRC WTP and along the Buckman Road corridor are nearing capacity. PNM already plans to upgrade infrastructure along Caja del Rio Road sometime in the near future. However, the construction of the proposed MRC WTP would require the construction and operation of a substation adjacent to the MRC WTP.

The operation of a new PNM substation in the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 22 under the Proposed Action will have a slight direct effect on grazing. Operation of the proposed substation would remove 2 acres of land from a grazing lease held by New Mexico State University. The 2 acres would be removed in perpetuity to be used by PNM for operation of a new substation next to the proposed MRC WTP. As a result of substation operation, New Mexico State University would effectively lose the use of 2 acres of grazing land held as part of the original grazing lease.

Reliability of the water supply to the City, County, and Las Campanas would be enhanced with the availability of more than one pipeline in the event of an accidental disruption of supply in one of the pipelines. Reliability of the water system would also be enhanced by the construction of additional electrical supply facilities that would make the system less susceptible to power supply related problems. The agreements made by various jurisdictions during project construction would remain in force during project operations. Of the 306 acres of total land disturbed during the construction phase, 247 acres would be restored to its pre-construction condition, leaving 59 acres of permanently converted land for project related uses. Lands permanently occupied by the project-related uses would include the diversion structure with the low-head pump station, booster stations, two WTPs, and power upgrades and road improvements. The land used by the construction of these structures would not be available for any other use (i.e., the land used for the WTP at MRC would no longer be available for recreational use). Minor losses of gazing lands would occur from Buckman Road improvements and land occupied by new facilities. The portion of Buckman Road crossing National Forest System lands would receive minimal improvements under the proposed action so that the maintenance level would remain as a "Level 2" road, maintained for high clearance vehicles. This is consistent with the recommendations of the Española District Roads Analysis Process (RAP) for this area.

Because water used for the project would either be San Juan-Chama Project water, or native Rio Grande water with appropriate rights, no pueblo water right would be directly and adversely affected by construction of the Buckman Project. In addition, less reliance on ground water for local water supplies would have a beneficial effect on ground water and surface water within the Basin, and so potentially would result in a beneficial effect to the Indian Trust Assets related to these water resources. See discussions about “Surface Water” (pages 93-115) and “Ground Water” (pages 115-122) in this EIS.

The operational effects of the Proposed Action on land use would be similar to those identified under the construction effects.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

**Construction Effects.** Two sediment facility alternatives to the Proposed Action are considered. Each sediment facility alternative would have slightly different construction effects than the Proposed Action. For example, under Alternative SF1, the sediment separation facility would be located further from the diversion structure and thus there would need to be a longer pipeline, which means more land disturbed and additional power to the pumps to ensure that the water reaches the sediment facility. Under Alternative SF2, there would be no return pipeline back to the river, and trucks would need to haul the sediment offsite.

**Operation Effects.** Operation effects of Alternative SF1 would be similar to those identified for the Proposed Action. With no return line constructed under Alternative SF2, truck hauling of sand would be required resulting in increased truck traffic on Buckman Road.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

**Construction Effects.** Alternative RWP1 would involve substituting a single pipeline for a double pipeline from Booster Station 1A to proposed Booster Station 2A. This would reduce disturbance of land along the Buckman Road corridor because only one trench would be dug instead of two. Consequently, effects on land use would be reduced from those identified for the Proposed Action. However, effects on existing infrastructure and utilities along the Buckman corridor would be the same as those identified for the Proposed Action.

The treated water pipeline under Alternative TWP1 would run 18,193 feet along the boundary between Las Campanas and BLM lands on Las Campanas property. Las Campanas has already planned for utility corridors on its property. Hence, effects on land use would be the same as those for the Proposed Action. Pipeline under Alternative TWP2 would run 21,528 feet on BLM lands in the existing Dead Dog Leg corridor except for a distance of about 1 mile. For this distance, BLM would have to establish a new pipeline corridor, resulting in a change in land use for this stretch. The pipeline route under Alternative TWP3 would run 30,337 feet along existing utility corridors and, thus, would result in the same effects on land use as the Proposed Action. Effects to existing utilities would depend on the timing of the implementation of Las Campanas’ construction of their utility corridors and on other factors.

**Operation Effects.** Operation effects to land use, infrastructure, and utilities from all alternative pipeline routes would be similar to those identified for the Proposed Action.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** The effect on land tenure and use would be similar to the Proposed Action. AGP1a would result in approximately 1.8 additional acres (based on a 30-foot-wide corridor) of additional land disturbance for the power line connection between the existing power source and the MRC WTP; however, the power line would be located within an existing ROW and, therefore, would not change land tenure and use. Under AGP1a the new substation would be constructed along Caja del Rio Road instead of next to the MRC WTP; therefore, no effects to grazing would result from the construction and operation of the new substation.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Most of the project facilities would be developed within the existing utility corridors. Therefore, no additive cumulative effects on land tenure and use, infrastructure, and utilities are expected from project implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives to the Proposed Action.

### **Surface Water Resources**

The Buckman Project area is located in an area of relative isolation in a region of diverse landforms and elevation. The surface water description and discussion provides a general overview of the surface water environment that is likely to be affected by the project, and also includes an evaluation of the environmental consequences to surface water that would be associated with the Buckman Project.

### **Affected Environment**

The proposed diversion would be located on the Rio Grande about 15 miles northwest of the City of Santa Fe, and about 3 miles downstream of the Otowi Bridge stream gaging station. The hydrologic setting includes the following components:

- The Rio Chama watershed,
- The Rio Grande between the confluence with Rio Chama and Cochiti Reservoir, and
- Cochiti Dam and Reservoir.

**Hydrologic Setting.** There are four reservoirs within this study area that are relevant to the discussions that follow: Heron, El Vado, Abiquiu, and Cochiti. Table 9 provides a summary of information about each of these reservoirs.

**Rio Chama Watershed.** The Rio Chama originates in extreme southern Colorado and flows 115 miles south and east to its confluence with the Rio Grande. The Rio Chama is the largest tributary to the Rio Grande in New Mexico. Total river length in New Mexico below Heron Reservoir is approximately 60 miles, with a drainage area of 3,159 square miles, of which 2,146 square miles are above Abiquiu Dam. Elevations in the watershed range from about 12,000 feet above sea level in the San Juan Mountains to about 5,600 feet above sea level at the mouth of the Rio Chama (USACE 1995).

- **Heron Dam and Reservoir (Rio Chama)** — Heron Dam and Reservoir are located on Willow Creek, a tributary of the Rio Chama, just above the creek's confluence with the Rio Chama. The dam and reservoir provide a regulating and storage capability for San Juan River water diverted through the Continental Divide via the San Juan-Chama Project. Heron Dam is located about 80 miles northwest of Santa Fe.

- **El Vado Dam and Reservoir (Rio Chama)** — El Vado Dam, located on the Rio Chama about 5 miles downstream from Heron Reservoir, was built by the MRGCD in 1934-1935 and was rehabilitated by Reclamation in 1954-1955. It is currently operated by agreement with Reclamation. Native waters stored and released from El Vado are subject to restrictions of the Rio Grande Compact. Water imported into the Rio Grande via the San Juan-Chama Project and stored in El Vado Reservoir is not subject to restrictions under the Rio Grande Compact. Signed in 1938, the Rio Grande Compact was entered into by the states of Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, with consent of the United States Congress to apportion the waters of the Rio Grande Basin.
- **Rio Chama from El Vado Dam to Abiquiu Reservoir** — On November 7, 1988, Congress passed Public Law (PL) 100-633, which added two segments of the Rio Chama between El Vado and Abiquiu Reservoirs into the national Wild and Scenic River system. The two segments combined are approximately 25 miles in length.
- **Abiquiu Dam and Reservoir (Rio Chama)** — Abiquiu Dam is located 32 river miles upstream from the Rio Chama's confluence with the Rio Grande. Abiquiu Dam and Reservoir are operated primarily for flood and sediment control, as well as storage of San Juan-Chama water. The USACE Albuquerque District operates Abiquiu Dam under the authorities of the Flood Control Acts of 1948 and 1950 and Public Law 86-645. The San Juan-Chama water storage pool has a water surface elevation of 6,220 feet above sea level, with a current storage capacity of 189,307 acre feet. The contract with USACE for the San Juan-Chama Project allows storage of up to 200,000 acre feet of water in Abiquiu Reservoir.
- **Rio Chama from Abiquiu Dam to Rio Grande Confluence** — Abiquiu Dam has regulated Rio Chama flows below the dam since 1963. The releases from the dam support the production of salmonids for several miles downstream (BOR/City of Albuquerque 2004). Since Abiquiu Dam was constructed, the average annual flow in the Rio Chama below the dam has been about 500 cfs. Seasonally, the average low flow month has been January, with an average flow of less than 200 cfs, and the average high flow month has been May, with an average flow of about 1,150 cfs.
- **Rio Chama Acequia (irrigation ditch)** — Currently it is estimated that there are 800 community acequia associations, mostly in the north central portions of New Mexico (USACE 1999). Seventeen acequias currently exist on the Rio Chama from Abiquiu to the Rio Grande confluence near Española. The reported rates of diversion for 15 of these acequias are up to 15 cfs (USACE 1999).

The diversion structure for each acequia consists of either a diversion dam or heading structure. The distinction between a heading and diversion dam is that a heading does not span the entire channel, whereas a diversion dam does. These structures have varying construction techniques. Brush, timbers, and boulders comprise the bulk of the less permanent structures. Acequia diversion structures require frequent maintenance and modifications to keep operating after high flows and to enable diversions at low flows. The permanent structures are concrete or gabion dams with integrated sluiceways, control gates, and headgates.

- **Ohkay Owingeh (irrigation ditch)** — The diversion was constructed in the early 1980s by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is a concrete structure that spans the width of the channel. No information is available regarding the diversion rates.



**Rio Grande from Confluence with Rio Chama to Cochiti Reservoir.** The physical form of the Rio Grande changes below its confluence with the Rio Chama. The Rio Chama carries a much higher load of sand and fine sediment than does the Rio Grande above the confluence. This factor and the increase in flow combine to make the Rio Grande below the Rio Chama a wider, flatter, and sandier river.

The reach of the Rio Grande from its confluence with the Rio Chama to the upstream limit of the Cochiti Reservoir water surface pool is approximately 15 miles long. The average slope of the riverbed is about 6 feet per mile, and the channel width averages about 300 feet. Predominant bed materials are gravel and sand, and the riverbanks are largely sandy with some gravel. Major tributaries in the reach are the Rio Pojoaque and Santa Cruz Creek, both ephemeral streams, meaning they may become dry during the summer (BOR/City of Albuquerque 2004). Much of this reach is canyon bound, and the remainder in open flood plain.

Much of the upper reach of this segment near Española was channelized in the 1950s. Below the Rio Chama, the channel bottom width increases to 70 feet to accommodate a flow design capacity of 7,850 cfs. Prior to the addition of riverbank protection, the river had shown a tendency to flow in a natural braided and meandering state.

Levees were built in the 1950s to protect the City of Española from flooding. Past gravel mining activities have adversely impacted the Española reach. In extracting sand and gravel products, miners have excavated the actual riverbed at various locations. This lowering of the riverbed has steepened the river slope and destabilized the channel for a considerable distance upstream. Typically, the river responded by upstream downcutting of the riverbed, causing the banks to become excessively high and steep. Caving and sloughing of unstable banks has caused widening of the river channel and increased braiding (BOR/City of Albuquerque 2004).

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Otowi gage is located about 10 miles below the confluence of the Rio Chama with the Rio Grande at the Otowi Bridge near San Ildefonso, New Mexico. The gage is located about 3 miles upstream of the Buckman Project site. The period of record for this gage is from February 1895 to December 1905 and June 1909 to the present, making it one of the oldest streamflow records in the United States. Since 1963, after Abiquiu Dam was constructed, the average annual flow at the Otowi gage has been about 1,500 cfs. Seasonally, the average high flow month has been May, with an average flow of about 3,400 cfs, and average flows from August through February typically range from about 800 to 1,000 cfs.

Much of the reach from the Otowi Bridge, including the area near the proposed diversion site, is confined within a canyon until it discharges into the pool of Cochiti Reservoir. The bed material here is dominated by sand, cobble, and some boulders. According to USGS flow records, at Otowi Bridge the width of the river is about 120 feet and the flow velocity is typically on the order of 3 feet per second during average flow conditions on the order of 1,500 cfs.

The proposed location of the Buckman Project is about 3 miles downstream of the Otowi gage. The streambed at this location is typical of the reach overall in that it is composed of gravel, cobbles, and boulders, with some sand. The proposed diversion structure location is immediately upstream of an arroyo, Cañada Ancha, on the south bank that is dry most of the year, but discharges during storm events. Cañada Ancha passes through the Las Campanas community and drains a large portion of the Buckman area.

**Table 9. Summary of reservoir data.**

<b>Reservoir Purpose</b>	<b>Storage Capacity (ac-ft)</b>	<b>Crest Elevation (ft)</b>	<b>Max Dam Height (ft)</b>	<b>Max Surface Area (ac)</b>	<b>Drainage Area (sq mi)</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Operator</b>
<b>Heron</b> Storage and delivery of San Juan-Chama water	401,000	7,199	269	5,950	193	Earthfill with crest 1,220 feet long	Located on Willow Creek, a tributary of the Rio Chama, just above the creek's confluence with the Rio Chama, 80 miles northwest of Santa Fe	Reclamation
<b>El Vado</b> Water storage for irrigation, recreation, incidental flood control, and sediment control	209,330 with 180,000 available because of sediments	6,902	205	3,200	877	Earthfill	Located on the Rio Chama about 5 miles downstream from Heron Reservoir	Built by MRGCD in 1934-1935; rehabilitated by Reclamation in 1954-1955; operated by agreement with Reclamation
<b>Abiquiu</b> Flood and sediment control, and San Juan-Chama water storage	1,212,000 at spillway crest with about 183,000 ac-ft for San Juan-Chama water <sup>1</sup>	6,375 maximum pool elevation	341	15,536	2,146	Rolled-earth structure with 30-foot top width	On Rio Chama, 32 miles upstream of Rio Grande confluence, about 50 miles northwest of Santa Fe	USACE Albuquerque District
<b>Cochiti</b> Primary flood control for snowmelt runoff control on mainstem of the Rio Grande	596,400 not counting sediment reductions	Approx. 5,475	250	9,365	14,900	Rolled, earth-filled embankment with a 5-mile crest length	On Middle Rio Grande, upstream of Rio Grande/Jemez River confluence, about 25 miles west-southwest of Santa Fe and about 25 river miles downstream of the proposed Buckman diversion	USACE Albuquerque District

<sup>1</sup> Only San Juan-Chama water is stored in Abiquiu Reservoir, the remaining capacity is for flood control or sedimentation or is excess (Source: compiled from USACE, Reclamation, and USGS databases available on the Internet.)

**Cochiti Dam and Reservoir (Rio Grande).** The Flood Control Act of 1960 authorized construction of the Cochiti Dam and Reservoir. Cochiti Dam is located on the Middle Rio Grande in Sandoval County in north-central New Mexico. It is located just downstream of White Rock Canyon near the confluence of the Santa Fe River and the Cañada de Cochiti. It is upstream of the confluence of the Rio Grande with the Jemez River. Cochiti Reservoir (lake) has a surface area at the top of the flood control pool that extends approximately 20 miles upstream into White Rock Canyon. Cochiti Dam serves as a diversion point for irrigation water for downstream users. Water is released to the Cochiti Eastside Main Canal on the left (east) bank and to the Sile Main Canal on the right (west) bank for irrigation of several thousand acres. Use of the river for irrigation in this area predates the construction of Cochiti Dam by many years.

Cochiti Reservoir is operated for flood control, sediment control, recreation, and the conservation and development of fish and wildlife resources. During normal, non-flood-control operation, irrigation and other requirements are met by regulating outflows to equal inflows to the extent possible.

**Streamflow.** A maximum flow in the Rio Chama below Abiquiu Dam of 2,990 cfs was recorded in July 1965, and there have been times when there was no flow in the channel since Abiquiu began operation in February 1963 (USACE 1995). Average monthly flows below Abiquiu Dam are illustrated in Figure 23. Evacuation of San Juan-Chama water stored in Abiquiu Reservoir may be required when the snowmelt forecast indicates a need for flood capacity exceeding 302,000 acre feet. The snowmelt runoff forecast point for the Rio Chama is the inflow to El Vado Reservoir. In the Rio Chama below Abiquiu Dam, summer and fall flows are higher than natural due to increased reservoir releases, including releases of imported San Juan-Chama water and storage from Abiquiu Reservoir. The average annual flow in the Rio Chama below Abiquiu Dam was about 500 cfs from 1962 to 2001. During this time period average annual flows have ranged from a low of 201 cfs in 1964 to a high value of 946 cfs in 1987.

The Otowi gage is located about 10 miles downstream from the confluence of the Rio Grande and Rio Chama and about 3 miles upstream from the proposed Buckman Project site. This location makes this gage useful for determining the effects of San Juan-Chama Project releases, which began in 1971, on Rio Grande flows. From 1971 to 1998, San Juan-Chama water increased flows at the Otowi gage by an average of 73 cfs, or about 5 percent of non-San Juan-Chama flow.

Because of its proximity to the Buckman site, the Otowi gage is useful for estimating the effects of the proposed diversion on flows in the Rio Grande. Figure 24 illustrates annual maximum daily flows in the Rio Grande at the Otowi gage from 1900 to 2000. Note that the period from 1963 to 2000 is shown separately from the earlier record because it is believed to be representative of current flow conditions, with Abiquiu Dam and flow regulations in place. The Otowi gage is the measuring point to determine New Mexico's obligation to Texas under the Rio Grande Compact. In accordance with the Colorado and upper Colorado River and Rio Grande Compacts, the inflows from the San Juan-Chama Project are specifically excluded from native flows at the Otowi gage and are accounted for separately.

Flows in the Rio Grande at Otowi vary with the seasons as shown in Figure 25 and 26. Figure 25 illustrates how average monthly flows have varied before and after the construction of Abiquiu Dam. Monthly average flows from August through February for the period 1963 to 2001 range from about 800 cfs to 1,000 cfs, whereas the average monthly flow for May for the same period is about 3,400 cfs. Figure 25 also demonstrates the effects of Abiquiu Dam on Rio Grande flows,

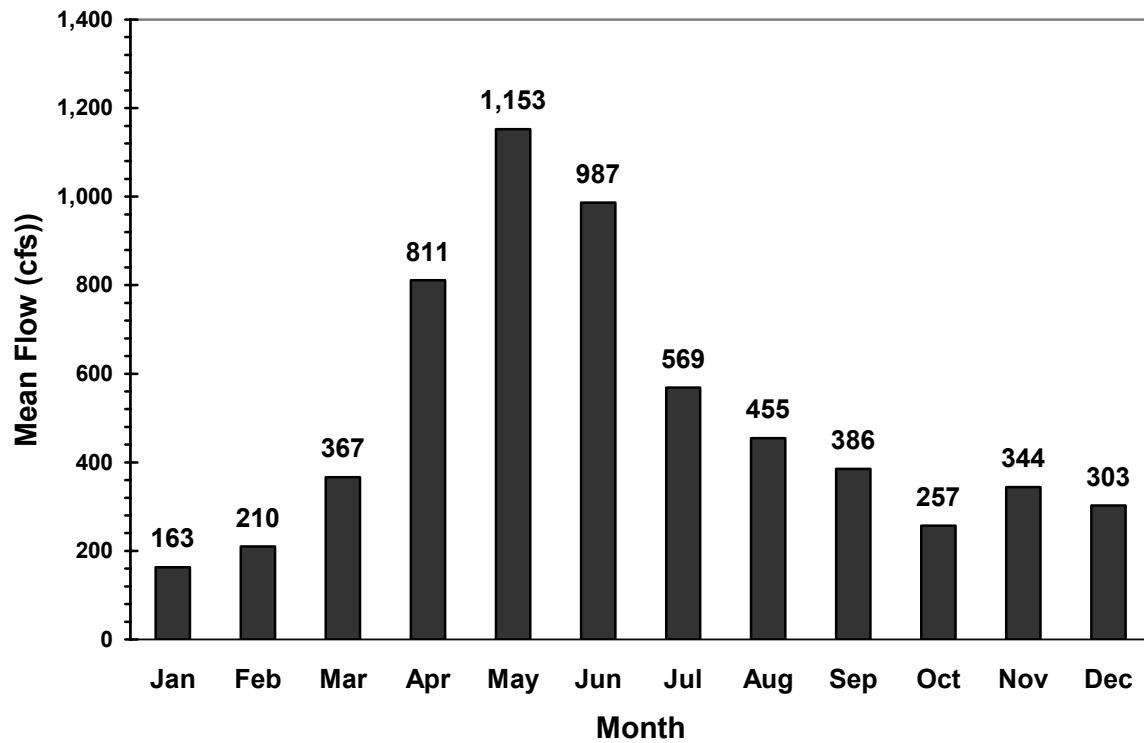


Figure 23. Monthly average streamflows in the Rio Chama below Abiquiu Dam. (Source: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>)

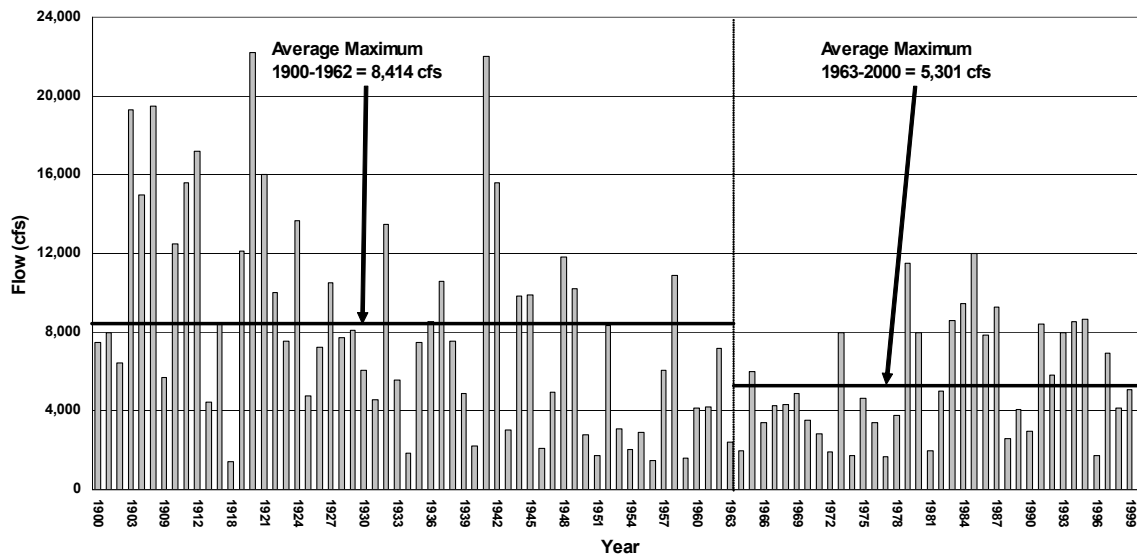


Figure 24. Maximum daily flows on the Rio Grande at the Otowi Gage, 1900-2000. (Source: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>)

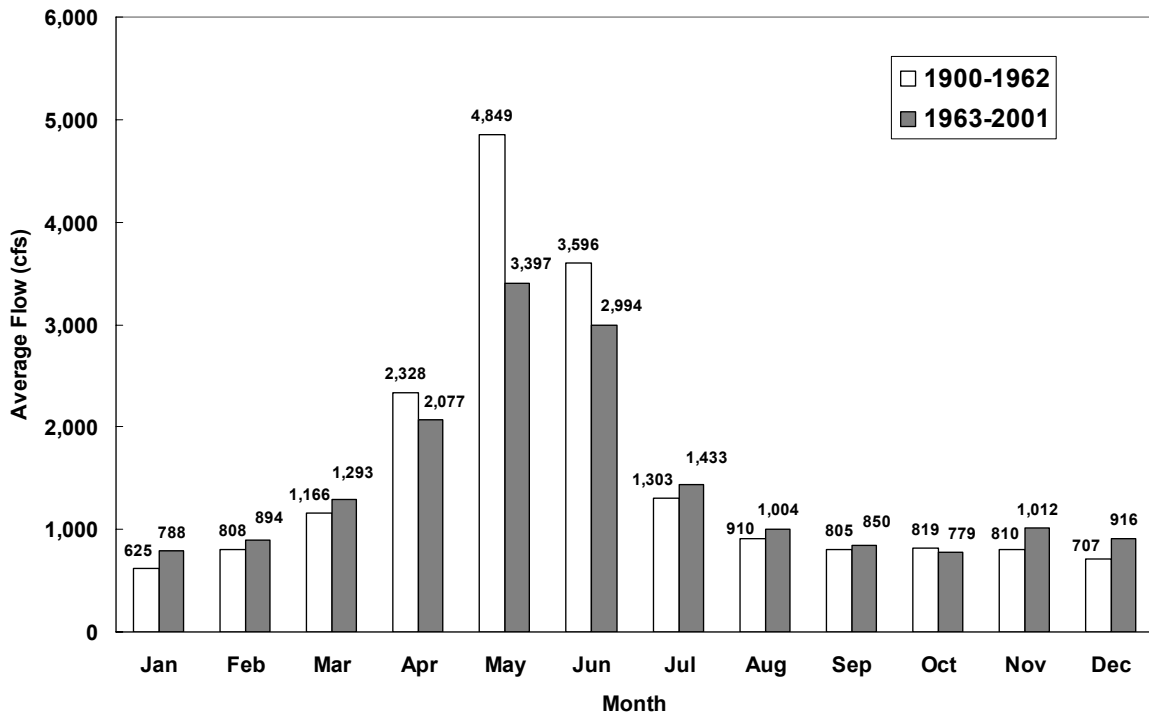


Figure 25. Average monthly streamflow (cfs) at Otowi Bridge 1900 – 1962 and 1963 – Sep 2001. (Source: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>)

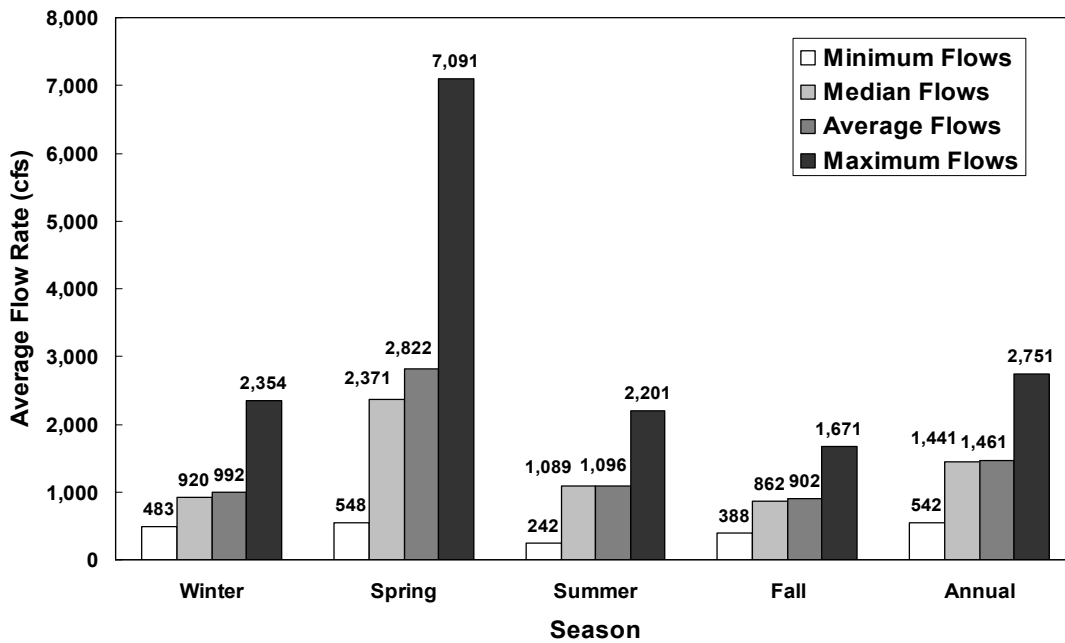


Figure 26. Average seasonal streamflow (cfs) at Otowi Bridge, Jan 1963 – Sep 2001. (Source: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>)

evidenced by generally lower peak flows after the dam was constructed. Flow data gathered by the USGS and shown in these and subsequent figures can be found at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nm/>.

Figure 26 illustrates how minimum, average, median, and maximum seasonal and annual flows have varied from 1963 through 2001. In Figure 26, the seasons have been defined by month as follows: winter = January-March, spring = April-June, summer = July-September, and fall = October-December. From 1963 through September 2001, the average annual flow in the Rio Grande at this site ranged from 542 cfs (1964) to 2,751 cfs (1985). The average annual flow for the period from January 1963 through September 2001 was 1,461 cfs.

Downstream from the Buckman site, the Rio Grande has been modified into a highly regulated and confined river system. Within a 116-mile stretch, there are four substantive irrigation diversion points: Cochiti, Angostura, Isleta, and San Acacia. These structures divert water from the river to the Middle Rio Grande Project system of canals and laterals for irrigation of 50,000 to 64,000 acres of cropland, including up to 8,300 acres of Pueblo cropland. Riverside drains and waterways collect surface water and shallow ground water, and convey it back to the river at numerous locations.

**Surface Water Quality.** Water quality in any reach of a river can be influenced by upstream flows. There are historical sources of contamination from mining and heavy metals in northern New Mexico's Red River drainage that enter the Rio Grande. There are discharges of wastewater effluent from the communities upstream of the Rio Grande/Rio Chama confluence. Some tributary streams that enter this reach can introduce high sediment loads during storm events. In addition, the water quality within the reach may also be influenced by other contaminants that enter the river from dispersed sources such as from the air or direct runoff.

Examination of the information sources used to characterize inorganic water chemistry indicates that the general quality of surface waters in the Jemez y Sangre planning region (an area encompassing three northern New Mexico counties: Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe) is generally good with respect to the water quality standards (Jemez y Sangre 2001). Total dissolved solids (TDS) levels in surface waters typically fall below a value of 250 milligrams per liter (mg/L); such TDS concentrations are substantially below the regulatory standard of 500 mg/L for this reach, and well below the 1,000 to 3,000 mg/L range that the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) uses to classify "slightly saline" waters (Jemez y Sangre 2001). In addition to meeting TDS standards, surface waters in the study region typically comply with the other water quality standards and guidelines.

The most abundant cation in regional surface waters is calcium, with sodium, magnesium, and iron occurring in lesser quantities. The predominant anions are bicarbonate and sulfate. Over most of the study region, the surface water is characterized as a calcium-bicarbonate type, although calcium-magnesium-bicarbonate and sodium bicarbonate types are occasionally observed (Jemez y Sangre 2001). Most surface waters in the study region are classified as moderately hard to hard because of the concentrations of calcium and magnesium in them.

Nutrients (typically compounds with nitrogen or phosphorous) dissolved in surface waters of the region can occur from agricultural land uses, urbanization, and wastewater discharges. Contributions to dissolved nutrients on the main stem Rio Grande are made by agricultural sources from as far north as San Luis Valley in southern Colorado and the Rio Chama above El

Vado Reservoir. Noticeable nutrient sources in and from tributaries include irrigated areas near Española, one of the more urbanized locales in the study region, and along the lower Santa Fe River downstream of the City of Santa Fe. Surface water in the Pojoaque Valley also occasionally contains elevated levels of nutrients.

A National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) study of the Rio Grande Valley (Jemez y Sangre 2001) was conducted by the USGS from 1993 to 1995. At most of the sites included in the study, monthly samples were gathered between April 1993 and September 1995, although the actual sampling schedule varied somewhat. The water chemistry variables that were examined included dissolved solids, major inorganic constituents, and nutrients. During the 1993 to 1995 sampling period, the median pH at Otowi Bridge was 8.1 and the median dissolved oxygen (DO) percent of saturation was 95. The average and maximum observed TDS levels were 186 and 221 mg/L, respectively. Hardness ranged from 95 to 140 mg/L as calcium carbonate, indicating moderately hard to hard water.

Levels of nutrients (compounds of nitrogen and phosphorous that tend to reduce oxygen levels in water) tend to be slightly higher at the Otowi site than in the Rio Chama, but are still quite low. This is partially due to the tendency of both flows and nutrient concentrations to be somewhat higher on the main channel of the Rio Grande above Española than they are on the Rio Chama (Jemez y Sangre 2001). During the NAWQA study, the Otowi median concentration of nitrite plus nitrate as nitrogen was 0.06 mg/L. This can be compared to the EPA Maximum Contaminant Level standard for drinking water of 10 mg/L.

Turbidity, a reduction in the clarity of water in natural rivers, is often strongly influenced by the presence of suspended sediment particles, particularly fine silts and clays. Suspended organic matter and, to a lesser extent, dissolved constituents may also influence turbidity. Suspended sediments are present in virtually all natural river systems. Silts and clays are derived from the areas that are drained by a river and the amount of fine material that reaches a river can be affected by practices in the watershed such as agriculture or urbanization. Because of the turbulence in a river such as the Rio Grande, silts and clays do not normally settle out until the water reaches a quiet body of water such as a reservoir or natural lake.

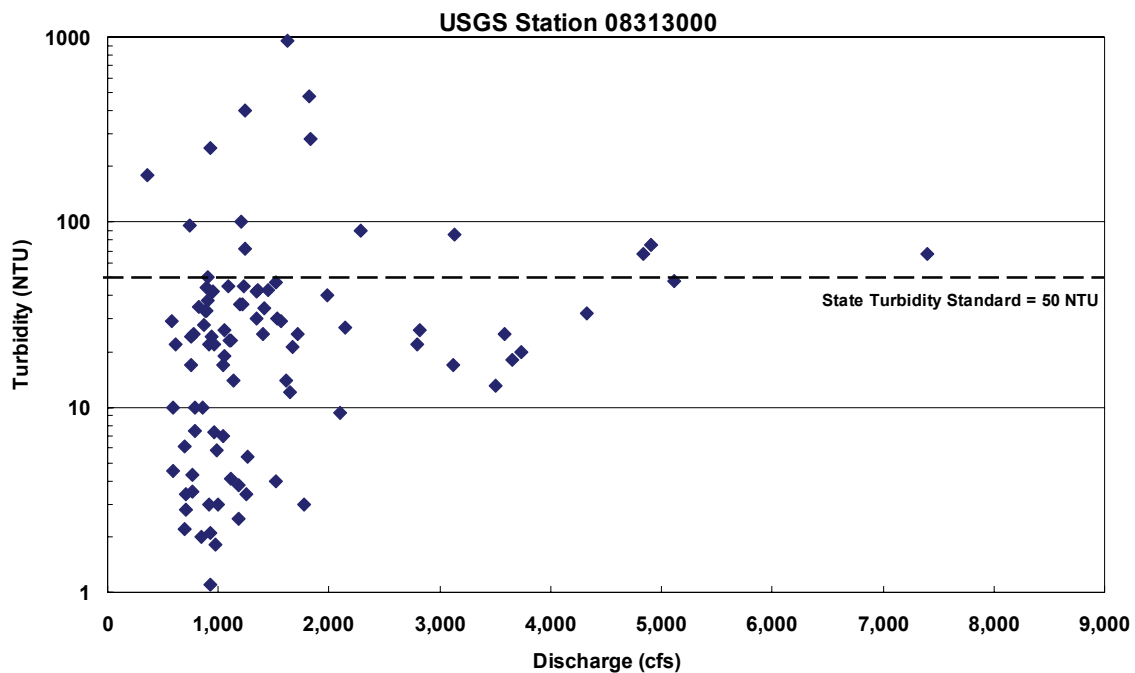
Between January 1990 and September 2001, the USGS recorded 98 turbidity samples (Figure 27) and 126 suspended sediment samples (Figure 28) at Otowi. The samples were collected at a wide range of instantaneous discharges, from less than 500 cfs to over 8,000 cfs. About 15 percent of the turbidity samples were above the current State standard. The State has proposed removal of the site-specific 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) turbidity standard as part of its 2003 Triennial Review Process. The State has also proposed changes to its general surface water quality criteria that would not limit increases to no more than 10 NTU over background turbidity when background turbidity is 50 NTU or less, or 20 percent when the background turbidity is more than 50 NTU.

**Water Use and Water Rights.** Water use and water rights issues include surface water and ground water consideration, both of which are discussed here. Water use and water rights for the City, County, and Las Campanas are discussed in that order. Additional considerations related strictly to ground water are discussed in the “Ground Water” section.

For the 10-year period from 1990 through 1999, average annual water usage for the City, including water supplied to the County and Las Campanas, has been supplied from the following sources (see Figure 29):

- Santa Fe River (from water stored in Nichols and McClure Reservoirs): 4,637 ac-ft/yr
- St. Michael’s Well: 215 ac-ft/yr
- City Wells: 2,051 ac-ft/yr
- Buckman Wells: 4,911 ac-ft/yr
- Total annual withdrawals: 11,814 ac-ft/yr

The City holds water rights applicable to each of its sources of supply. For the Buckman Project, relevant City water rights and agreements include a contractual agreement with Reclamation for a joint 5,605 ac-ft/yr City and County San Juan-Chama Project contract allocation (for analysis purposes, it has been assumed that the City would use 5,230 ac-ft/yr and the County would use 375 ac-ft/yr), and about 131 ac-ft/yr of native Rio Grande rights. The City has a permit with the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (OSE) to pump up to 10,000 ac-ft/yr from the Buckman Well Field. This permit requires the City to offset stream depletions caused by pumping, which is administered by OSE using ground water modeling. Historically, the City has used a portion of its San Juan-Chama contract allocation to offset depletions to the Rio Grande, and water rights holdings on the Rio Pojoaque and Tesuque Creek to offset depletions to those tributaries to the Rio Grande.



**Figure 27. Turbidity data recorded at Otowi Bridge (January 1990 – September 2001).**  
 (Source: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>)



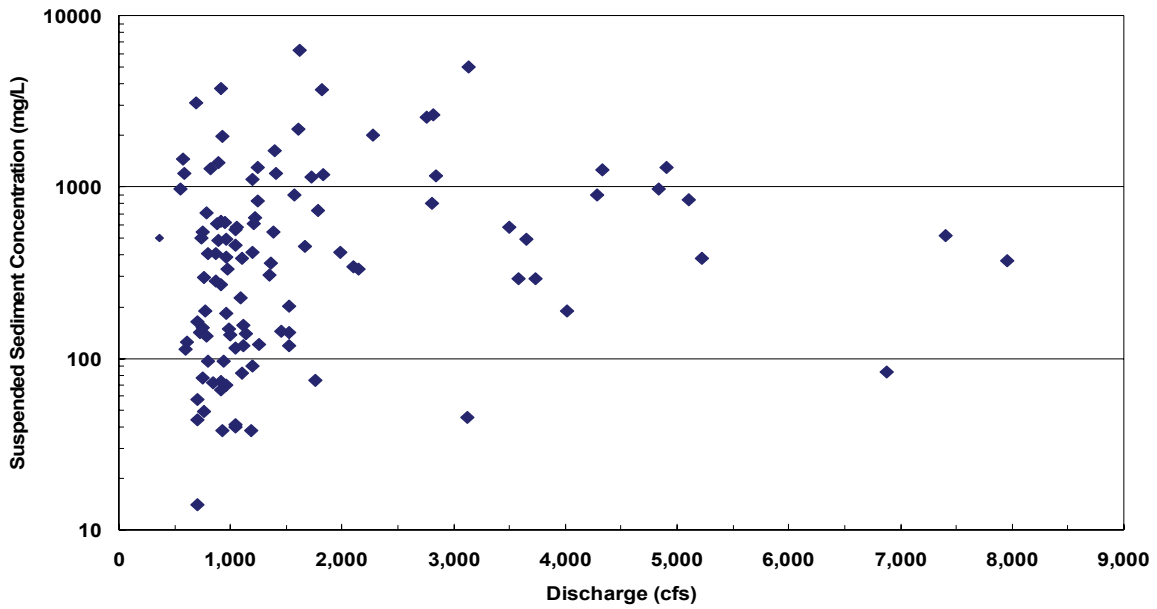


Figure 28. Suspended sediment data recorded at Otowi Bridge (Jan. 1990 – Sept. 2001). (Source: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>)

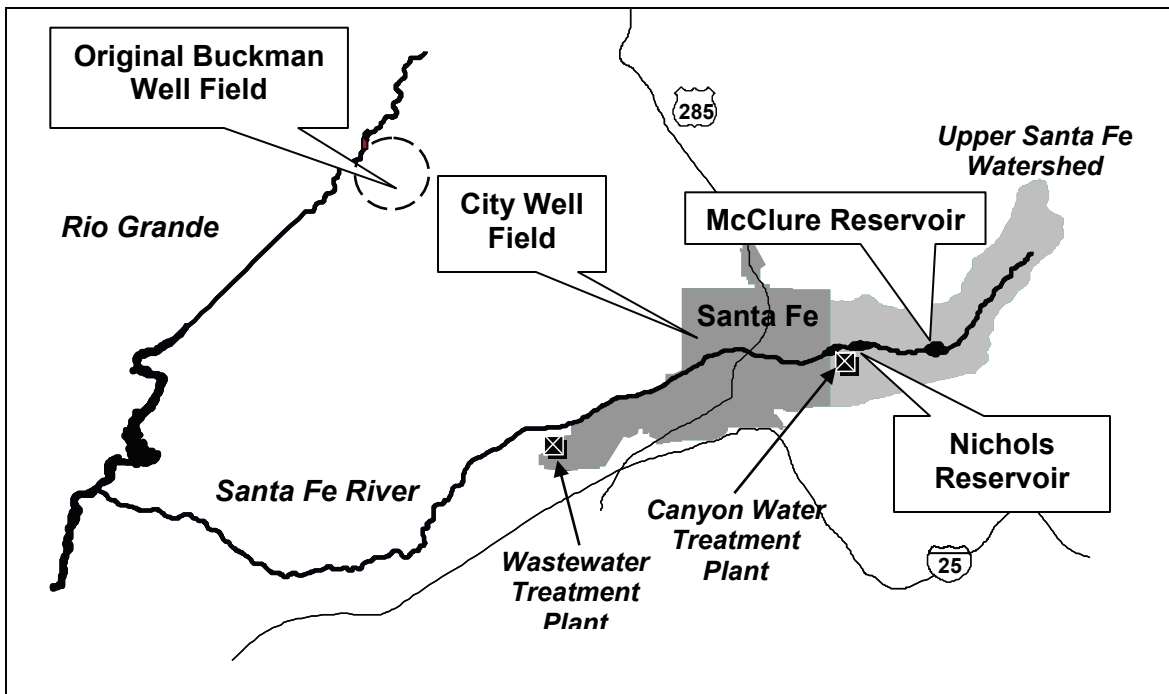


Figure 29. City of Santa Fe existing water supply system.

The City is considering the lease of 3,000 ac-ft/yr of San Juan-Chama Project water from the Jicarilla Apache Nation. Upon execution by the parties and approval by Reclamation, this lease would supplement the City's surface water supplies through 2057. The City could use the leased water within the City's Water Utility Service System and/or for meeting regulatory requirements associated with the City's Water Utility Service System. To the extent that this water may be diverted through the Buckman Project, the total facility diversion would not exceed 8,730 ac-ft/yr or 32 cfs.

The primary goal of the Buckman Project is to quickly provide an increased level of drought protection and lower the stress on the existing Buckman Well Field. To meet longer term needs associated with increases in demand over time, the City and County would be evaluating additional supply sources in the coming years. The longer term planning would include continued use of the Buckman Project as one component of supply for meeting the City and County's long-term needs. However, in the interim—before the long-term alternative components can be implemented—it is expected that some growth in demand would occur. Thus, the Buckman Project was sized to meet the City and County needs now and through approximately 2010, and Las Campanas needs at full build-out which is anticipated to occur between approximately 2010 and 2015.

Current demands on the City's water system (including County usage, but excluding Las Campanas usage) in normal precipitation years have been estimated to be approximately 12,000 ac-ft/yr for the year 2001. (Note: In 2000, water use restrictions related to drought conditions reduced this demand to 11,282 ac-ft/yr, including approximately 117 ac-ft/yr provided to the County.) The City's demand in 2010 is estimated to be between 13,310 ac-ft/yr (drought conditions) and 14,760 ac-ft/yr (non-drought conditions) exclusive of any water supplied to the County or Las Campanas (CDM 2001a). The City proposes to divert up to 5,230 ac-ft/yr through the Buckman Project. This amount is equivalent to the City's San Juan-Chama water contract allocation, which would allow it to meet its expected demand in 2010 while reducing pumping from the Buckman Well Field.

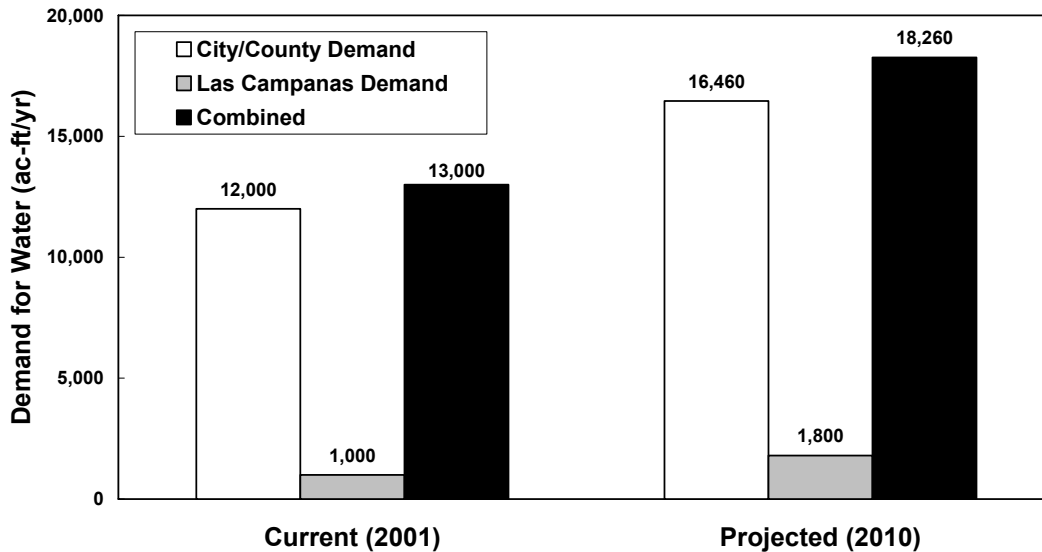
The City has an agreement to provide up to 500 ac-ft/yr of water through the City's system to the County. The County has indicated that it expects its 2010 annual demands to be 1,700 ac-ft/yr. Currently the County holds 375 ac-ft/yr of San Juan-Chama contract allocation. According to the County's 40-Year Water Plan, the County has acquired 71.2 ac-ft/yr of additional consumptive water rights in Socorro. The evaluation of near-term San Juan-Chama alternatives was based on an assumption that the County would secure all additional water rights needed to meet its 2010 projected need of 1,700 ac-ft/yr. It is also assumed that the agreement would be extended indefinitely and expanded to accommodate the 1,700 ac-ft/yr of County demands.

The current water demand at Las Campanas is about 1,000 ac-ft/yr. The total annual water demand (for irrigation and potable treatment and use) for Las Campanas at build-out would be 1,800 ac-ft/yr. Build-out is anticipated in 10 to 15 years. Las Campanas representatives have stated that they have secured water rights needed through purchase and lease arrangements to meet the 2010 projected need of 1,800 ac-ft/yr.

Current and projected water demands are illustrated in Figure 30, using the City's upper demand projection.

**Flood Plains.** Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps are available that show the inundation area that would occur with a 100-year flood (a flood event with a 1 percent chance of occurrence each year) along the Rio Grande (FEMA 1988). These maps, which are quite large, range in scale from 1:6,000 in urban areas to 1:24,000 in rural settings, are included here by reference. Flood zone maps can be obtained from the FEMA at <http://web1.msc.fema.gov/webapp/commerce/command/ExecMacro/MSC/macros/welcome.d2w/report>. A portion of the flood zone map in the vicinity of the proposed diversion site is shown in Figure 31.

Flood events in the Buckman area of the Rio Grande have been reduced by the flood control reservoirs upstream. However, heavy rainfall events occasionally occur along this reach, resulting in higher than average discharge through White Rock Canyon. Over time, high flow events have caused the river to reclaim an old meander channel near the terminus of Buckman Road. Subsequent flood events have removed the cobble bar and sand bars that are between the abandoned meander channel and the active channel. This suggests that high rates of sediment transport occur that move boulders, cobbles, sand, silt, and clay down the Rio Grande through White Rock Canyon.

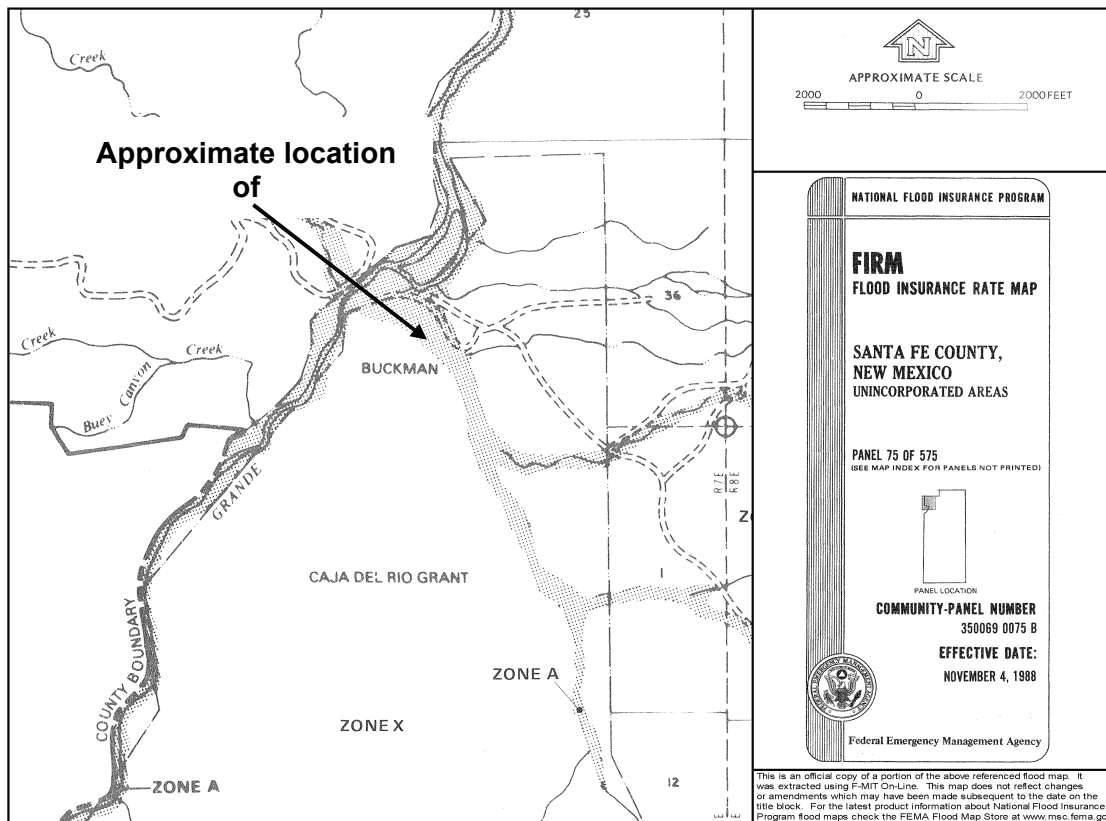


**Figure 30. Water demand for current and projected future conditions (showing City’s upper demand estimate for 2010).**

The Cañada Ancha Arroyo is the principal drainage corridor for lands surrounding the Buckman Road and Dead Dog Leg corridors. During flood events, everything from boulders to suspended load sediments are carried down the arroyo. Sediment that is transported through the arroyo, along with material eroded along the banks of the arroyo, is discharged into the Rio Grande. The Rio Grande then carries away the sediments, or the sediment stabilizes the channel from further incision at the confluence. The proposed diversion facility has been located at a point along the Rio Grande immediately upstream of the confluence with Cañada Ancha. Comparisons of aerial photographs have shown that this location of the channel bank has been shown to be stable over a period of nearly 60 years.

## Environmental Consequences

Neither the Proposed Action nor its alternatives are expected to have noticeable effects on surface water resources, either during construction or once it is operational. Generally, with the project in place, the effect on average flows in the Rio Grande would be less than 1 percent. Of that 1 percent effect, about two-thirds would be associated with diversion of water imported to the Rio Grande from the inter-basin San Juan-Chama Project. In addition, the project would have little



**Figure 31. Flood zone designation in the vicinity of the proposed Buckman Diversion, where Zone A indicates the 100-year flood zone boundary. (Source: FEMA Web site, see text.)**

measurable effect on water quality and essentially no effect on flooding or flood potential. There would be a beneficial effect on water use in the region. Some indirect effects on water rights would occur as the applicants make certain that water rights are in place in order to fully utilize the diversion.

Annual, monthly, and seasonal effects on streamflow are discussed in this section. Although some natural variations in flow occur throughout each month, monthly flow was judged to be the smallest reasonable unit of time to evaluate the effects of the project. Flow in rivers and streams is normally expressed in cfs, whereas water usage is expressed in ac-ft/yr. A flow of 1.34 cfs for an entire year would be equivalent to 1,000 ac-ft/yr. This section addresses changes to flow;

however, effects of flow changes on biota, including the silvery minnow, are discussed in the section, “Rio Grande Silvery Minnow” later in this chapter.

### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative is defined as no new direct diversion at the Buckman site. The applicants would continue to seek other methods to meet their near-term water supply needs. The Buckman area has served as a source of water for the Santa Fe area since 1972. The Buckman Well Field currently consists of 13 wells and a transmission pipeline that supplies approximately 40 percent of the water supply for the Santa Fe area in a normal precipitation year. In recent years, production from the Buckman Well Field has averaged about 5,200 ac-ft/yr. Surface water from the Santa Fe watershed supplies approximately 40 percent of the water supply in an average year of precipitation and the City Well Field provides the remaining 20 percent. These figures include the community of Las Campanas, which currently receives its water supply from the City. The County has an agreement with the City for up to 500 ac-ft/yr of water, but has used less than 200 ac-ft/yr under this agreement in recent years. The County also operates six wells that collectively produce about 77 ac-ft/yr.

Under the No Action Alternative, the Buckman Well Field would continue to provide about 40 percent of the City’s water supply. The No Action Alternative would result in continued depletions of the aquifer in the Buckman area and the flows of the Rio Grande and its tributaries, which would continue to be offset by releases of San Juan-Chama water or purchased water rights. The delayed effects of pumping ground water at Buckman since 1972 would continue to be observed in the tributaries and the Rio Grande. The effects are delayed because of the distance between the streams and the well field. The effects on the Rio Grande are much more direct because of its close proximity to the well field. However, there are also residual depletion effects due to historic and ongoing pumping.

According to the permit from the New Mexico OSE, the City is required to offset any depletion of flows in the Rio Grande and its tributaries as a result of pumping from the Buckman Well Field. This has been accomplished with releases of San Juan-Chama water into the Rio Grande and by retiring native water rights owned by the City in the two tributaries and the Rio Grande. The two main Rio Grande tributaries in the region are the Rio Pojoaque and its tributary, Tesuque Creek, which are part of the Nambe, Tesuque, Pojoaque drainage system. The method used by the OSE to estimate stream depletions was used in the current analysis to determine the effects of the Buckman Well Field on the volumes of water flowing in these two streams. The results show that the cone of depression for the Buckman Well Field causes a small reduction in the volumes of ground water flowing into these tributaries and, thus, affects their overall flow. Both the City and Las Campanas have purchased and transferred or retired water rights in these tributaries to compensate for the depletions calculated by OSE. Approximately 63 ac-ft/yr in the Rio Pojoaque and approximately 43.3 ac-ft/yr (including accounting for Northwest Well requirements) in Tesuque Creek have been retired and dedicated to offsets required by Buckman pumping. These dedicated rights may only be used as offsets.

The Rio Pojoaque and Tesuque Creek experience reductions in flow because a portion of the water they convey comes from the discharge of ground water, in addition to surface runoff from snowmelt and rainfall. For 2001, a reduction of approximately 52 acre feet in the volume of water flowing in the Rio Pojoaque and a reduction of approximately 32 acre feet from the volume of water flowing in Tesuque Creek was estimated as a result of pumping at Buckman based on

calculations using the OSE's numerical model (McAda and Wasiolek 1988; Core 1996). Historical data from a USGS gaging station indicate an average flow of 2,317 ac-ft/yr in Tesuque Creek (gaging station 8308025 near Tesuque). The data for Tesuque Creek are for the period between June 1998 and September 1999; this limited period of record may not fully characterize current conditions.

The center of the Buckman Well Field cone of depression lies close to the Rio Grande. This closeness results in a greater depletion of the Rio Grande flow than occurs in the Rio Pojoaque and Tesuque Creek. Computer modeling is also used by OSE to estimate the amount of flow reduction in the Rio Grande each year as a result of pumping the Buckman Well Field. Computer modeling using the OSE's numerical model estimated a depletion of approximately 2,569 acre feet for 2001 in the volume of water flowing in the Rio Grande as a result of current and historical well field pumping at Buckman. The average depletion of the Rio Grande for the 5-year period from 1997 to 2001 was 2,487 ac-ft/yr (McAda and Wasiolek 1988; Core 1996). All Buckman well depletions on the Rio Grande are offset with San Juan-Chama water and a small amount of retired native Rio Grande rights.

In addition to the recently installed Well No. 9, an environmental assessment was recently prepared for four additional wells (Tetra Tech 2003) that have since been installed. With the addition of these four supplemental wells, by the end of 2006 the Rio Grande is expected to experience a reduction in flow of approximately 2,949 ac-ft/yr. By the end of 2060, the Rio Grande would experience a reduction in flow of approximately 4,507 ac-ft/yr. Buckman well depletions on the Rio Grande would continue to be offset with San Juan-Chama water and a small amount of retired native Rio Grande rights. Because of this, there would be no net depletion of water in the Rio Grande.

By the end of 2060, the anticipated effect on the Rio Pojoaque of operating all 13 wells at Buckman is projected to be a reduction in flow of approximately 327 ac-ft/yr. By the end of 2060, the anticipated effect on Tesuque Creek of operating all 13 wells at Buckman is projected to be a reduction in flow of approximately 167 ac-ft/yr. These numbers do not take into account OSE's permit requirements for the Buckman Well Field, which would prevent pumping at Buckman from resulting in depletions of these tributaries in amounts greater than the amount of water the City owns rights to in them. The actual rates the City would be allowed to pump through 2060 are impossible to predict because they depend upon future demands, the availability of other supplies, weather patterns, actual rates of pumping at Buckman during the most recent year, and other variables. The net result of OSE's Buckman Well Field permit requirements is that there can be no depletions to streamflows from pumping of the Buckman wells that are not fully offset. Depletions in streamflow are illustrated in Figure 32.

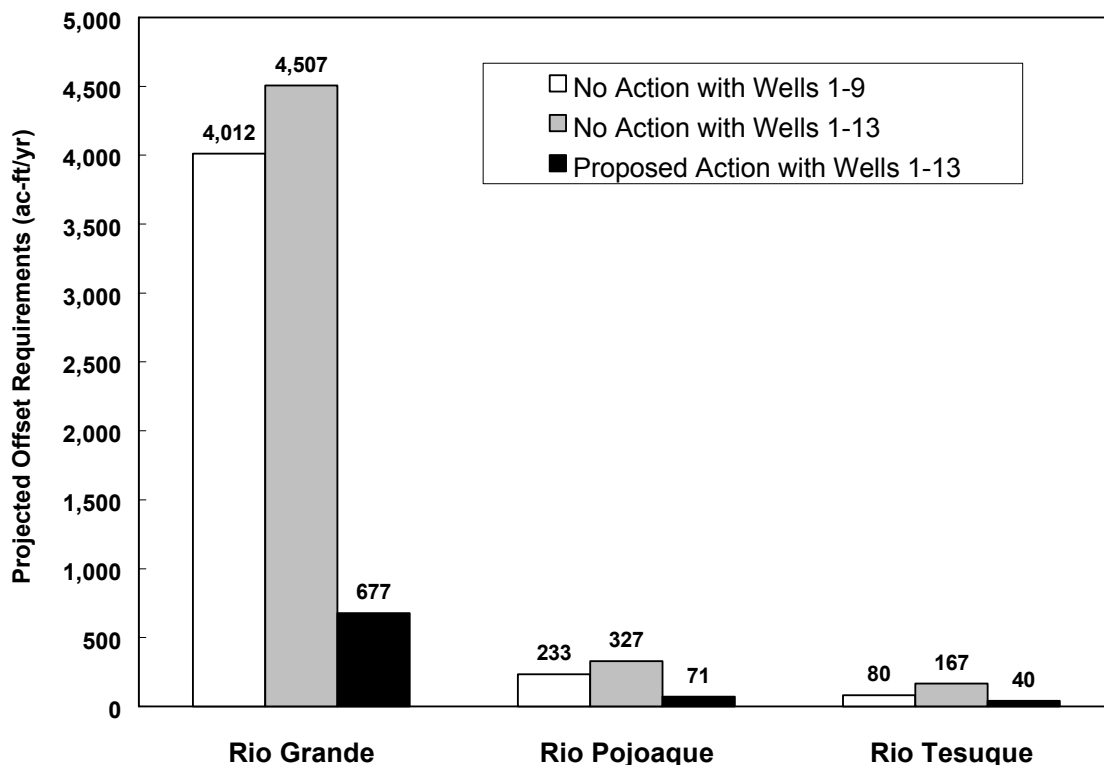
The No Action Alternative would not affect water quality or sediment transport in the river. Likewise, neither the flood plains nor the flood potential would be affected. However, the near-term demand for water in the region would not be satisfied by the current supply system. The applicants would seek other water rights and other methods for meeting the projected demand. Other than the alternatives addressed in this document, no other options are available to evaluate.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

Minor flow reductions would occur downstream of the diversion. Under most flow conditions, reductions in native Rio Grande flows would be on the order of 1 percent. Upstream of the diversion, Rio Grande flows would be enhanced by about 4.2 cfs on average by additional

releases of San Juan-Chama water. Effects on water quality, sediment transport, and flood plains and flooding would be essentially immeasurable. The effect on water use would be beneficial. The Proposed Action would allow the City to meet its water use needs to the year 2010, the County to meet its needs for a longer period, and Las Campanas to meet its needs through full build-out. The Proposed Action would not directly affect water rights, but would have some indirect effects. The City and County would exercise their full San Juan-Chama allocation. The County would need to secure additional rights to fully utilize its share of the capacity of the diversion and Las Campanas would need to maintain its existing leased rights.

**Construction Effects.** Localized disturbance of streamflow currents would occur during and after construction of the temporary cofferdam and upon removal of the cofferdam. This temporary disturbance would include some redirection of flows near the cofferdam structure. The cofferdam would be placed within a period of about 1 to 2 weeks, and a similar amount of time would be required for removal. The cofferdam is projected to be in place for approximately 5 months. In addition, the cofferdam would be placed during periods of low flow in summer and autumn.



**Figure 32. Projected offsetting requirements in 2060 in the Rio Grande and tributary flows. (Source: Modeling data provided by CDM—Permit Applicants’ Contractor)**

Since there would be no discharges to the flow or added contaminants, no serious short-term or long-term construction effects to water quality have been identified. Some temporary increases to turbidity would be expected during construction activities, primarily during placement and removal of the cofferdam. After completion of construction, turbidity would return to pre-construction levels. During construction of the diversion, effects on other water quality

parameters would be minimal, including effects on the presence of dissolved solids, trace metals, or organic materials. The cofferdam would isolate flows from construction activities. As a condition of the construction permits, any spills of petroleum products or other materials would be cleaned up prior to removal of the cofferdam.

**Operation Effects.** The direct and indirect effects on surface water associated with operation of the Buckman Project are discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Effects on Streamflow** — Some localized changes in streamflow currents would occur near the diversion structure. The changes are not expected to affect the flow regime in the river. Generally, with the project in place, the effect on average flows in the Rio Grande would be less than 1 percent. Of that 1 percent effect, about two-thirds would be associated with diversion of water imported to the Rio Grande from the inter-basin San Juan-Chama Project. Streamflows upstream of the diversion would be enhanced by about 4.2 cfs on average through releases of San Juan-Chama Project water.

The volume of water diverted at Buckman would fluctuate through the year based upon water demands, availability of other sources, and operational protocol. Using historical water usage patterns and by developing estimates on water demands in 2010, an estimate of the maximum diversion by month in 2010 was made. This maximum monthly average flow was calculated based upon the total combined City, County, and Las Campanas demand minus availability of the other sources of water including the Santa Fe River, City Well Field, and Buckman Well Field. Under some conditions, the other sources may be limited or unavailable, such as during drought conditions or failure of the existing Buckman pipeline. The excess demand would be supplied by the diversion. The Las Campanas demand was then added to the City and County demand.

Table 3 in Chapter 2 shows the maximum monthly average diversion projections for all proponents for each month under 2010 drought conditions. The maximum monthly average diversion would not occur in every month, nor is it likely to occur in consecutive months. Peak flow through the diversion would occur during the summer months when water demand is the highest. During 7 months, the maximum monthly average flow would be less than 70 percent of the peak day diversion of 28.2 cfs. The daily diversion volume during any given month would vary from a net flow of zero to 28.2 cfs, averaging up to 12 cfs over the course of a year. For purposes of analysis, estimated average monthly diversions are estimated in Table 10. The diversion values shown in Table 3 and Table 10 do not include the “carriage” water. Up to an additional 4 cfs would be diverted and returned to the river with diverted sand near the point of diversion.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the system may not operate under several conditions. The minimum design capacity would mitigate possible effects on the lowest flows in the river. The system would not be able to operate at full capacity when river flows are below about 200 cfs, and may be inoperable when river flows are below about 150 cfs.

**Table 10. Estimated average monthly diversions.**

Month	cfs
January	6.8
February	7.7
March	8.5
April	11.0
May	14.4
June	15.8
July	15.8
August	14.4
September	13.7
October	11.9
November	6.8
December	7.7
Annual Average	12.0



During operation, maximum diversions from the river would be about 32 cfs, with about 4 cfs returned with the sand fraction of the sediment load, for a net maximum withdrawal of 28.2 cfs. The average annual diversion would be less than half this amount, up to about 12 cfs (8,730 ac-ft/yr), and would depend on demands and other factors. About 64 percent of the water withdrawn would be of releases from the San Juan-Chama Project. The average annual flow rate in the Rio Grande at the point of diversion, since the construction of Abiquiu Reservoir, has been 1,461 cfs.

The expected monthly maximum average diversions were scaled to estimate average monthly and seasonal diversions. A scaling factor was used so that the average of the monthly diversion would be equal to the annual average diversion of 12 cfs. The estimated average monthly diversions are shown in Table 10. Figure 33 shows the maximum average monthly diversion and the estimated average monthly diversion as a percent of the average monthly flows for the period January 1963 through September 2001 (see Figure 25 for monthly river flow data). Figure 34 shows similar data by season and annually (see Figure 26 for seasonal and annual river flow data). Note that seasons are defined the same as for Figure 26 (winter = January-March, spring = April-June, summer = July-September, and fall = October-December). The average diversion would be less than 1 percent of the total flow in the river (1963-2001), and the average diversion of native Rio Grande water would be less than a third of a percent of the total flow in the river.

For the period of January 1963 through September 2001, the lowest average monthly flow of record was 212 cfs for the month of July 1963. These low flows were caused by an unusual combination of events including a minor effect of reservoir startup operations at Abiquiu. The projected average diversion for the Buckman Project would be up to 12 cfs. Had this diversion occurred in July 1963, it would have represented less than 6 percent of the lowest monthly flow of record. Of that total diversion, about 2 percent would have been native Rio Grande water and the remainder (4 percent) would be San Juan-Chama water.

Currently the City is required to offset about 2,600 ac-ft/yr of depletions in Rio Grande flows as a result of pumping from the Buckman Well Field. The City has historically used its approximately 131 ac-ft/yr of native Rio Grande rights to partially meet these offset requirements. With the diversion in place, the City and County could directly divert their full allocation of San Juan-Chama water, 5,605 ac-ft/yr (provided that historical and future Buckman Well Field pumping offsets could be met by other sources). These additional flows would enhance streamflow upstream of the diversion by about 4.2 cfs on average from current conditions (i.e., including current San Juan-Chama releases).

Ground water modeling discussed in the section, “Ground Water” of this document shows that adding the direct diversion with reduced pumping from the Buckman Well Field would cause a gradual reduction in the depletions of flow in the Rio Grande that are caused by ground water withdrawals. Depletions of flow from ground water pumping are offset by releases of San Juan-Chama water and a small amount of retired native Rio Grande rights. The ground water/surface water interactions and quantities of depletions are discussed in the section, “Ground Water” with the ground water analysis.

***Effects on Sediment Transport and Deposition*** — The Proposed Action would not have noticeable effects on sediment transport and deposition when compared to the order-of-magnitude type variations that occur seasonally in sediment transport in a natural river such as the Rio Grande. This conclusion is based on hydraulic and sediment calculations for conditions before and after the proposed diversion.

The effect of the proposed diversion facility on flow characteristics and sediment transport in the river downstream of the diversion can be estimated from equations used in hydraulic analysis of river systems. Because the majority of sediment is smaller than can be removed with the proposed sediment separation facility near the point of diversion, the majority of sediment diverted with raw water from the Rio Grande would be pumped up to the WTP where it would be removed and disposed. Therefore, the total sediment load in the Rio Grande would be reduced by operation of the Buckman Project. Downstream of the proposed diversion, flow depth would decrease slightly and there would be some sediment deposition. The calculations are discussed in the Water Resources Technical Report that was prepared in support of this EIS.

Using hydraulic equations for flow in a river and sediment transport, it is possible to estimate the degree to which the bed level could be adjusted by a slight reduction in flow with and without the return of the sand fraction. From these equations it was estimated that the thickness of the potential deposition immediately downstream of the diversion would typically be less than an inch and confined to an area within a few hundred feet of the diversion. With the variations in a typical natural river channel that could be expected in the Rio Grande, this amount of deposition would be essentially immeasurable. This calculation assumes that coarse sediment would be returned to the river with 4 cfs of carriage water, a feature that is part of the Proposed Action, but would not be returned to the river as one of the sediment facility alternatives. Sediment facility alternatives are discussed later in this document.

As an example, for a flow of 1,000 cfs, the calculations suggest that with the sand return, the deposition downstream of the diversion would be about 0.16 inch and 0.11 inch without the sand return. Neither amount would be noticeable in a natural river channel like that of the Rio Grande that undergoes continual erosion and deposition.

***Effects on Water Quality*** — The Proposed Action could have very minor effects on turbidity, but would not affect any other water quality parameters such as hardness, total dissolved solids, organic constituents or any other constituents that could be present in the river. Naturally present sands with particle sizes coarser than 0.1 mm would be returned to the river; however, since these would be present in the river anyway, this is not considered to be an adverse impact. Re-injection of sand would have little effect on turbidity, since: (1) for most flow conditions it would represent less than 1 percent of the total sand being transported by the river; and (2) higher turbidity levels are normally associated with organic material, dissolved solids, and suspended fine silt and clay particles rather than coarser sand particles. None of the constituents mentioned in item (2) would be affected by the diversion. Since the diversion would not involve effluent discharges or any chemicals, petroleum, or other products that could affect water quality, no other water quality effects have been identified.

***Effects on Water Use and Water Rights*** — The Proposed Action is expected to have a beneficial effect on water use and an indirect effect on water rights. The Buckman Project would allow the applicants to meet their projected demand for water through 2010, and in the case of Las Campanas, through full build-out. Approximately two-thirds of the maximum diversion, including all of the City's portion, would be associated with imported water from the San Juan-Chama Project. Las Campanas has leased rights to supply its requirement. The Proposed Action would have an indirect effect on water rights in that these leases would need to be maintained in order for the community to continue to use water from the diversion. Likewise, the County's 40-Year Water Plan has identified a number of in-place and existing rights including some San Juan-Chama water to satisfy its demand. Leasing or purchasing water rights would be subject to permits and approvals from the OSE that are outside the scope of this document.

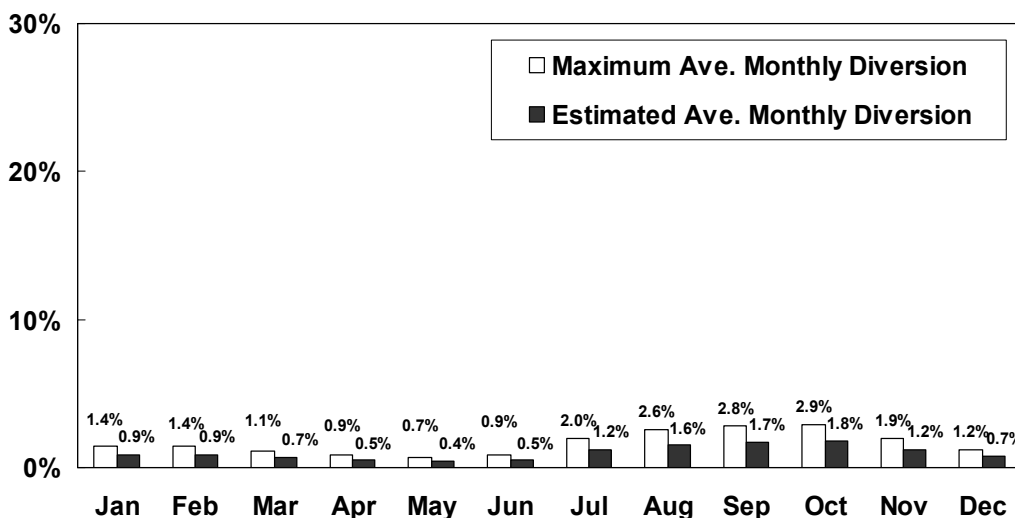


Figure 33. Proposed diversions as a percent of monthly flow at Otowi Bridge (Jan 1963-Sep 2001).

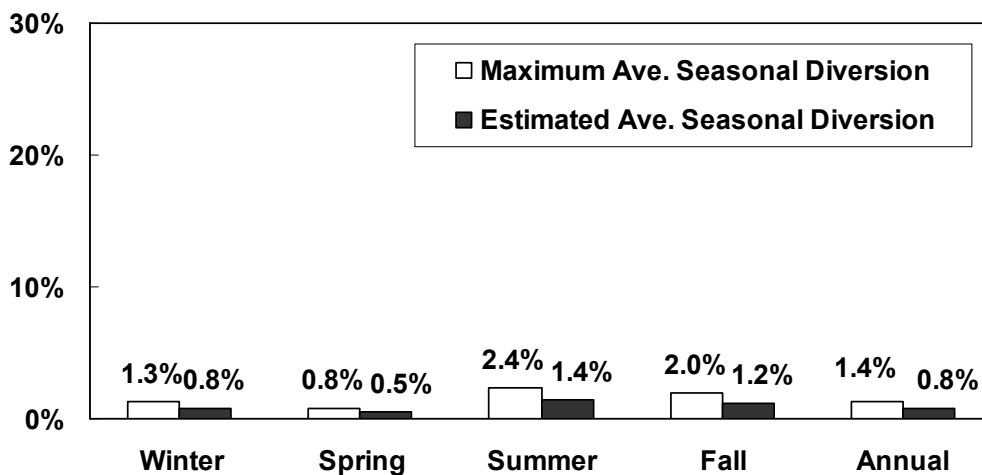


Figure 34. Proposed diversions as a percent of seasonal flow at Otowi Bridge (Jan 1963-Sep 2001).

**Effects on Flooding or Flood Plains** — The Proposed Action is not expected to affect flooding or the flood plain boundaries. The flood plain boundary is defined by the flow event that would be expected to be equaled or exceeded once every 100 years, or put another way, has a 1 percent chance of occurrence each year. Under such a flow, the diversion structure would be completely submerged. Its small footprint, with respect to the flood plain coupled with its low profile, would have virtually no effect on the flood elevation or the boundary of the flood.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of Sediment Facility Alternatives**

**Construction Effects.** Construction effects would be essentially the same as those discussed for the Proposed Action.

**Operation Effects.** Two sediment handling alternatives were developed, designated SF1 and SF2. Effects on streamflow if Alternative SF1 is selected would be the same as for the Proposed Action. With Alternative SF2, the maximum diversion would be reduced from 32 cfs to 28.2 cfs; however, since there would be no return flow for sand re-injection, the net diversion would still be 28.2 cfs under peak withdrawal conditions. Therefore, the effects on streamflow would be nearly identical to those for the Proposed Action.

Effects on sedimentation, if Alternative SF1 is selected, would be the same as for the Proposed Action. With Alternative SF2, there would be no return flow for sand re-injection; therefore, the effects on sedimentation would be slightly less than for the Proposed Action. However, there would still be some reduction of carrying capacity for sediment transport. Therefore, there would likely still be some localized sediment deposits immediately downstream of the diversion. These deposits would likely be smaller than those associated with the Proposed Action and not measurable.

The effects on water quality for either sediment facility alternative would be similar to those associated with the Proposed Action and would be very minimal. Some temporary increases to turbidity would be expected during construction activities. After completion of construction, turbidity would return to pre-construction levels. The diversion is not expected to affect other water quality parameters. Similarly, no measurable effects to flooding or flood plains would occur.

Water use and water rights effects associated with sediment facility alternatives would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of Pipeline Route Alternatives**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Several alternate routings of pipelines are being analyzed. With proper construction controls in place, the effects on surface water resources would be the same as the Proposed Action for all pipeline alternatives.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** The effects on surface water resources would be the same as for the Proposed Action for the power upgrade alternative.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Releases of water from the San Juan-Chama Project coupled with the Buckman Project would have some cumulative effect on flows upstream of the project and on storage in the three reservoirs on the Rio Chama, but these effects would be minor. Releases of San Juan-Chama water could be timed to coincide directly with water diversions through the Buckman Project or, if it is deemed beneficial for recreational or ecological purposes, they could be timed to match natural flows in the river channel or for release during low flow periods. The schedule for release of San Juan-Chama water would be determined through a process that would involve the applicants, OSE, and Reclamation.

The cumulative effect of the diversion, coupled with releases of water from the San Juan-Chama Project, on storage in the reservoirs would be minimal. Abiquiu Reservoir has a capacity of greater than 1.5 million acre-feet with almost 200,000 acre-feet available for storage of San Juan-Chama Project water. On a reservoir of this size, gradual releases of 5,605 acre-feet (i.e., the City and County's combined San Juan-Chama Project annual water allocation) into and out of Abiquiu, when spread out over a year would affect surface elevation by only a few inches. If releases of San Juan-Chama water were timed to coincide with low flow conditions in the river system, there could be some ecological and recreational benefit to having an extra 10 to 20 cfs in the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande during the late summer above the Buckman site and some additional flow downstream as well. Under such a release scenario, during high flow events in the spring, flows downstream of the diversion would be reduced slightly, but on balance over the year, the City and County would take only their allotment of San Juan-Chama water.

The effects of storage of water by the City would be minimal, given that the City would utilize existing reservoirs consistent with existing reservoir management. The effects of release of the water from Heron would be essentially unchanged from existing conditions as the Nation's water has been released from Heron for various purposes. The release of water from downstream storage would have minimal effects on flow conditions in the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande. The releases may have a minor beneficial effect by enhancing base flows because water managers could normally make release on a gradual and consistent release schedule consistent with the City's use of the water. Consequently, the cumulative effects of the lease and Buckman Project would not be significant.

An area of possible cumulative effect to the Rio Grande flows would be along the channel of the Rio Grande from Cochiti Dam to San Acacia, above Socorro. The cumulative effects of the Buckman Diversion have been analyzed, taking into account projects that are likely to affect the silvery minnow within the planning horizon for this project (2010). The effects would be associated with the potential future transfer of rights for about 2,000 ac-ft/yr of water from below Cochiti Dam to the Buckman Diversion location. Changes in the amount of waters available to maintain flow below Cochiti would be of potential concern for any effects on silvery minnow habitat in that area. Thus, to avoid duplication, the effects on flow changes and consequences to the silvery minnow are included within the "Cumulative Effects" discussion presented in the "Biological Resources" section later in this chapter.

## **Ground Water**

The ground water description and discussion provides a general overview of the ground water resources in the study area that could be affected by the project. It also includes an evaluation of the environmental consequences to ground water resources that would be associated with the Buckman Project.

## **Affected Environment**

Ground water is used for municipal water supply, as well as agricultural, domestic, and industrial purposes in the City of Santa Fe (Buckman and City of Santa Fe Well Fields, see Figure 29), Los Alamos, Guaje, Pajarito Mesa, and Otowi Well Fields, the City of Española, and smaller communities such as El Dorado, south of Santa Fe that are or may become a part of the County's service area. The Buckman Well Field currently consists of 13 wells that typically are used to supply about 40 percent of the water demand from the City in a normal precipitation year. The

wells pump from the Tesuque aquifer, part of the Tertiary-age Santa Fe Group of Rio Grande rift basin-fill sediments. The 5-year (1997-2001) average operational pumping rate for the well field (wells 1-8) is approximately 560 gallons per minute per well (gpm/well). The 2001 average operational production for all of the wells (wells 1-8) was 590 gpm/well.

The operation of the Buckman Well Field has resulted in a regional decline of the potentiometric surface associated with the confined Tesuque aquifer formation, known as aquifer drawdown. Drawdown from well pumping does not occur uniformly throughout the aquifer. The greatest amount of drawdown occurs in the vicinity of the wells. Less drawdown of the aquifer occurs at locations progressively further from the wells forming what is known as a cone of depression. The cone of depression can also be depicted graphically as a series of concentric rings centered either on an individual well or on an entire well field. Each ring represents a contour interval, much like those used on a topographic map, to depict the shape and depth of the ground water around a well or well field. It is important to characterize the drawdown at varying distances from an individual well or well field so the effects of pumping can be assessed in terms of its effects on reducing the pumping capacity of existing wells, reducing flow of natural springs, or reducing the flow of surface water in local or regional streams.

The measured drawdown within the Buckman Well Field has been approximately 200 feet since 1982. The drawdown (since 1970s prepumping conditions) that is greater than 10 feet, as predicted by a numerical ground water model occurs over a region measuring roughly 1 mile by 0.5 mile within the center of the well field. Drawdown values exceed 300 feet in the portion of the aquifer where most of the pumping occurs, and localized areas (near wells) exceed 340 feet in this same portion of the aquifer. Historical pumping from the Buckman Well Field has led to current annual depletion of flow in the Rio Grande, Rio Pojoaque, and Tesuque Creek, at rates of approximately 2623, 52 and 32 ac-ft/yr, respectively, through 2001 as predicted by the numerical model used by the OSE (McAda and Wasiolek 1988; Core 1996). Depletions for these rivers and tributaries are offset by water rights owned or leased by the City. Residual offset requirements from Buckman pumping are expected to last for many decades on all rivers and tributaries, even if Buckman well pumping were ceased immediately.

The City of Santa Fe tests the ground water from the Buckman Well Field and provides the information in Annual Water Quality Reports (<http://sfweb.ci.santa-fe.nm.us/waterwise/WaterReport2001a.pdf>). The City tests for a variety of constituents as required by the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, such as arsenic, barium, chromium, lead, copper, fluoride, nitrate, and various byproducts of drinking water chlorination. In 2001, with two exceptions, these constituents were measured as nondetectable or below Maximum Contaminant Levels or Maximum Contaminant Level Goals. The two exceptions involved two samples that were slightly above the Action Level for lead. An Action Level is a concentration above which a water provider must take additional steps to reduce point-of-use concentrations of a given compound.

## **Environmental Consequences**

Either the Proposed Action or its alternatives, excluding the No Action Alternative, would be beneficial to regional ground water resources. The diversion would allow for reduced pumping of the Buckman Well Field, which would allow recovery of water levels compared to the current cone of depression. In addition, there is no reason to conclude that the project would have any adverse effect on ground water quality.

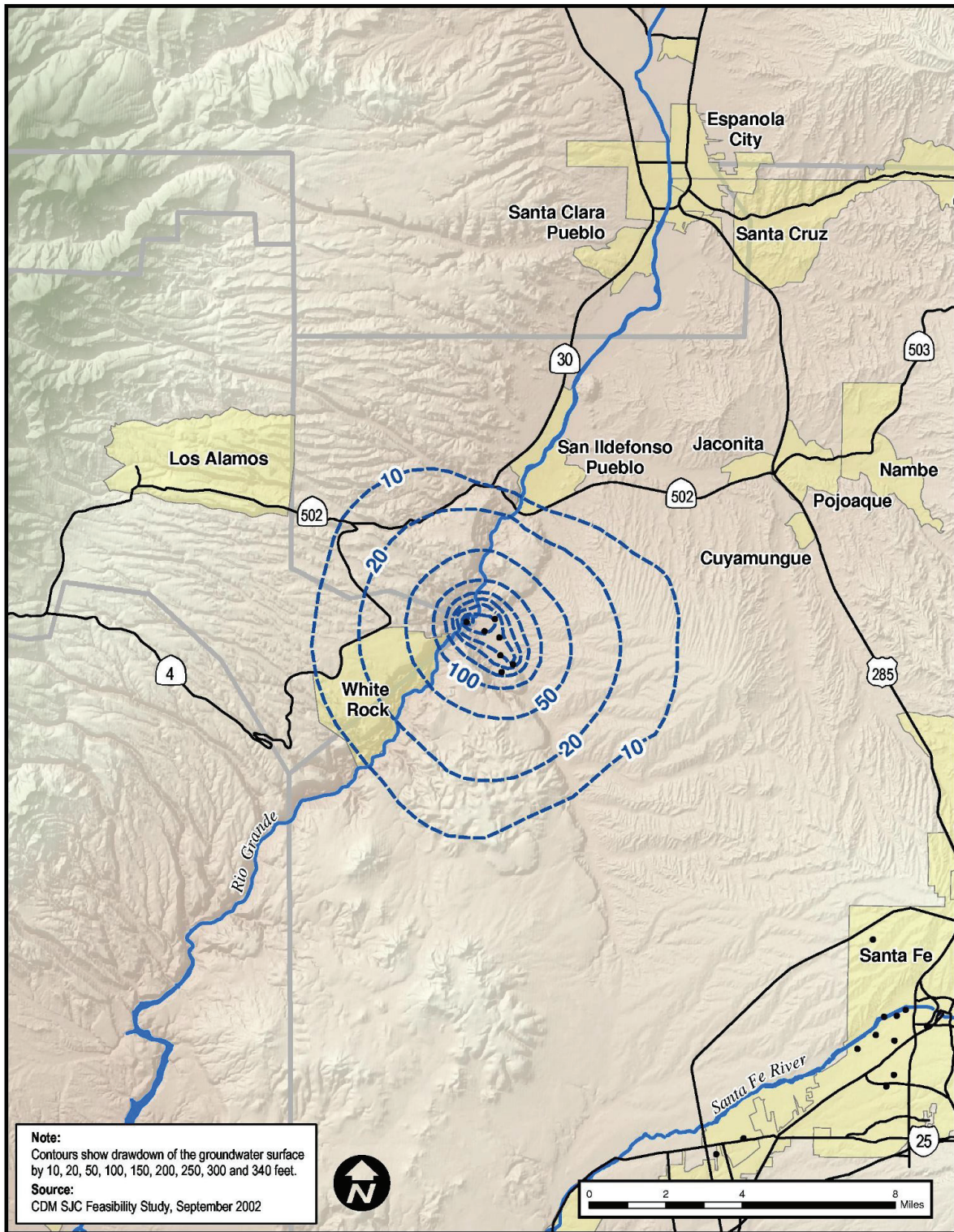
### **No Action Alternative**

Ground water flow computer models have been created to estimate the future drawdown and other effects of pumping on the aquifer and surface waters in the Santa Fe basin. A model was developed by Camp Dresser & McKee (CDM) for the City (“City model”) for water supply planning that divides the aquifer into nine separate layers defined by their depths and water-bearing properties. The detailed layering used in this model allows the effects of pumping to be described more accurately than it has been by other models developed for the region. Most of the hydrologic data used in this section were obtained from reports produced by CDM (2002a and 2002b), an engineering firm under contract with the City to perform hydrological studies and water supply planning for this project. Data from the modeling effort was also summarized in the Buckman Supplemental Wells Environmental Assessment (Tetra Tech 2003)

The descriptions of the cone of depression presented in this document are based on the effects to the aquifer in Layer 4 of the City model. This layer corresponds to the depth from which most of the Buckman wells pump and is, therefore, the layer in which the largest drawdown effects occur. Layering of geologic deposits in the Santa Fe region’s aquifer system causes the cone of depression to spread out laterally within a layer and to dampen out in the vertical direction. Since most domestic wells in the region are shallower than municipal wells, they tap aquifer layers less affected by the Buckman Well Field pumping. The resulting drawdown associated with the Buckman Well Field that is seen in these shallower layers and the associated effects felt by individual domestic wells would, in most cases, be smaller than are described in this section, which is based on effects to the deeper model layer. The drawdown values reported here can thus be considered a reasonable worst-case for most wells.

The cone of depression that currently exists in the vicinity of the Buckman Well Field is the result of pumping water from the well field over the last 30 years (see Figure 35). An average of 5,200 ac-ft/yr of water have been pumped from the Buckman Well Field each year for the period of 1995 to 2001. The pumping of each individual well at Buckman has incrementally contributed to the overall well field cone of depression. In 2001, the depth to ground water at the center of the cone of depression for the Buckman Well Field was approximately 260 feet, as measured in a City observation well located near the center of the well field. This depth to water represents the combined effects of pumping from all private, agricultural, and municipal wells in the region, although it is most strongly influenced by pumping from the Buckman wells. Aquifer drawdown from pumping the Buckman Well Field takes on an irregular shape due to the local topography and influence of the Rio Grande. Modeling indicates that the 10-foot contour interval of the cone of depression, in Layer 4 of the City model, currently extends approximately 4 miles to the west, north, and northeast, 5 miles to the east, southeast, southwest, and northwest, and 6 miles to the south, away from the center of the cone of depression (CDM 2002a) for a diameter of approximately 9 miles. However, the cone of depression at the top of the saturated zone (Layer 1 of the City model) near the ground surface is much smaller.

As mentioned in the previous section, “Surface Water Resources,” under the No Action Alternative for surface water, Buckman Wells would, for planning purposes, continue to be pumped at their most recent 5-year rates through 2060. This alternative would result in continued depletions of the aquifer in the Buckman area and the flows of the Rio Grande and its tributaries—the Rio Pojoaque and Tesuque Creek—and the City would have to continue to provide offsets for these depletions. The effects on the Rio Grande are much more immediate because of its close proximity to the well field. By 2060, within the aquifer layer most directly



**Figure 35. Simulated drawdown from Buckman Wells 1-8 in 2000, ground water layer 4. (Source: CDM – Permit Applicants’ Contractor)**



affected by pumping (Layer 4 of the City model), 10 feet or more of aquifer drawdown from the Buckman Well Field cone of depression would extend approximately 5 miles to the north, 7 miles to the northeast and southwest, 8 miles to the east and southeast, 11 miles to the south, and to the boundary of the aquifer to the west and northwest, away from the center of the cone of depression. At the water table surface, however, the drawdown values would be much smaller.

According to the results of computer modeling, by 2010, pumping Buckman wells would cause the center of the cone of depression to be approximately 400 feet deep (CDM 2002b), which represents an increase in depth of 140 feet from 2001 to 2010. The model indicates that with the passage of time, the average annual increase in the depth of the center of the cone of depression would decrease to less than 2 feet per year in the 2010-2060 interval.

The effects of pumping from the Buckman wells on stock water wells in the area under this alternative were modeled by CDM (2002b). Because the actual pumping rates for the stock water wells are unknown, it is not possible to predict the effect that drawdown of the aquifer would have on yields. It is, however, possible to predict drawdown resulting from operating the Buckman Well Field as described under this alternative. Ultimately this tells us very little about whether or not a particular stock water well would be affected under the No Action Alternative because a low output well would not require more than a few feet of saturated thickness (the distance between the bottom of the well and the static ground water level), but it does provide a basis of comparison for the Proposed Action. A typical stock water well only pumps a few gallons per minute, which does not require a large saturated thickness, so the output of some of the wells that are expected to experience a high degree of drawdown from the operation of the Buckman Well Field would not be affected much, if at all. Alternatively, a well with a very high output may be severely affected by a small reduction in its saturated thickness. The effects of an action are described here in terms of the reduction in the saturated thickness for a given well. A reduction in saturated thickness in a well of greater than 70 percent is generally considered to be an adverse effect. When using this criterion, computer modeling indicates that six stock water wells would probably be adversely affected by 2060 (with all 13 Buckman wells online).

The operation of Buckman Wells 10-13 under the No Action Alternative scenario will result in continued depletions of the aquifer in the Buckman area and the flows of the Rio Grande and its tributaries—the Rio Pojoaque and Tesuque Creek—as discussed in the section, “Ground Water, Affected Environment.” The effects of pumping ground water at Buckman would continue to be observed on the Rio Grande and its tributaries. The effects on the Rio Grande are much more immediate because of its close proximity to the well field. By 2060, with all 13 Buckman wells operating within the aquifer layer most directly affected by pumping (Layer 4 of the City model), 10 feet or more of aquifer drawdown from the Buckman Well Field cone of depression would extend approximately 6 miles to the north, 6 miles to the northeast and southwest, 8 miles to the east, 12 miles to the southeast, 13 miles to the south, 8 miles to the southwest, and to the boundary of the aquifer to the west and northwest, away from the center of the cone of depression. At the water table surface, however, drawdown values would be much smaller.

Additional details concerning the effects of Buckman Wells 10-13 in the Buckman Well Field can be found in previous reports (CDM 2002b) and in the Buckman Supplemental Wells Environmental Assessment (Tetra Tech 2003).

**Table 11. Cumulative effects of the Buckman Well Field on the regional aquifer.**

	Distance to 10-Foot Contour Interval from the Center of the Buckman Well Field Cone of Depression (mi)							
	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW
Existing Condition (2000)	4	4	5	5	6	5	4	5
No Action in 2060 with Wells 1-9	5	7	8	8	11	7	AB	AB
No Action in 2060 with Wells 1-13	6	6	8	12	13	8	AB	AB
Proposed Action with Wells 1-13 in 2060	3	4	5	8	6	3	4	4
Incremental Effect of Proposed Action in 2060	-3	-2	-3	-4	-7	-5	<-2	<-2

AB = Aquifer Boundary.

Note: Drawdown as predicted by the City's numerical ground water flow model, using results from the model layer in which the largest amount of Buckman Well Field pumping occurs. (Source: Tetra Tech 2003)

In addition to the adverse effects to ground water associated with No Action and the City's continued reliance on its well fields, there would be some adverse effects associated with continued reliance on wells within the County's service area. Communities and landowners who currently rely on over-stressed ground water resources would continue to deplete these ground water sources.

### Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action

**Construction Effects.** Ground water, particularly the deep ground water aquifers that are used for water supply, would not be affected by construction of the Proposed Action because the applicants would continue to use their regional water supply sources as they would under the No Action Alternative until construction is complete.

**Operation Effects.** The proposed Buckman Project is expected to become operational in late 2006 or early 2007. This project would allow the City and County to withdraw their allotment of San Juan-Chama water directly from the Rio Grande. At that time, pumping from the Buckman Well Field would be scaled back to a long-term average of approximately 1,000 ac-ft/yr. The effects of operating the Buckman Well Field in conjunction with the direct diversion have been modeled by CDM (2002b). The model results show that the shift to the direct diversion would result in a gradual rebound of the aquifer water levels coupled with a decrease in the extent of the cone of depression, especially when compared to the effects of continued ground water pumping through 2060.

Table 11 shows the projected effects of reduced pumping on the extent of the cone of depression based on the City's ground water flow model, described previously. The distance to the 10-foot contour of the cone of depression has, therefore, been assumed to provide a reasonable practical boundary. Table 11 shows the distance to the 10-foot contour for existing conditions and for future conditions for the No Action Alternative with and without four planned new wells and the Proposed Action. In 2060, the projected total distance across the cone of depression from north to south is projected to be 19 miles (6 miles north and 13 miles south) without the Proposed Action, and only 9 miles with the Proposed Action.

By 2060, offset requirements on the Rio Grande from reduced Buckman well pumping are projected to be equal to approximately 677 ac-ft/yr, which represents 1,946 ac-ft/yr less than the current (2001) situation and would be approximately 3,830 ac-ft/yr less than would occur in 2060 under the No Action Alternative with 13 wells in place. Similar results would occur in the Rio Pojoaque and Tesuque Creek. Table 12 provides a summary of calculated offset requirements for the Rio Grande and its tributaries.

A comparison of stock water well depths, original depths to ground water in those wells, and the anticipated cumulative drawdown effects from pumping all 13 Buckman wells for each year through 2060 was conducted by CDM (2002b) to determine if any of the stock water wells might be adversely affected. To maintain a consistent reference for the comparison of effects, the cumulative effects are evaluated in terms of saturated thickness. A reduction in saturated thickness of 70 percent or more is considered an adverse effect. No stock water wells are expected to be adversely affected by pumping all 13 wells at Buckman either by 2006 or by 2060 if the direct diversion is in place. Further details are provided in CDM (2002b) and the Supplemental Wells EA (Tetra Tech, Inc. 2003).

In addition to the beneficial effects to ground water associated with less reliance on the City’s well fields, there would be some beneficial effects associated with less reliance on wells within

**Table 12. Comparison of direct and cumulative effects to surface water resources. (Source: Tetra Tech 2003)**

	Required San Juan-Chama Offsets to Rio Grande <sup>a</sup> (ac-ft/yr)	Estimated Offsetting Water Rights in the Rio Pojoaque (ac-ft/yr) <sup>b</sup>	Estimated Offsetting Water Rights in Tesuque Creek (ac-ft/yr)	Approximate Center Depth of Cone of Depression (feet)	Well Field Production (ac-ft/yr)
Existing Conditions (2001)	2,623	48	12	260	5,200
No Action in 2060 with Wells 1 – 13	4,507	327	167	500	10,000
Proposed Action with Wells 1 – 13 in 2060	677	71	40	60	1,000 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The City’s permit from the Office of State Engineer to operate the Buckman wells states that operation of the Buckman Well Field shall not cause a depletion of the flow of the Rio Grande. San Juan-Chama water stored in upstream reservoirs is released to offset depletions of water in the Rio Grande that result from pumping ground water from the Buckman Well Field. Because of this, the Rio Grande experiences no reduction of flow from operation of the Buckman Well Field.

<sup>b</sup> The City has purchased water rights in the Rio Pojoaque and Tesuque Creek to compensate for flow reductions experienced in these tributaries as a result of pumping ground water from the Buckman Well Field. Because the cumulative effect of operating the existing nine wells at Buckman and the proposed direct diversion after 2006 would eventually result in depletions that exceed the City of Santa Fe’s water rights in the Rio Pojoaque, the City is presently studying additional means of offsetting future depletions in the Rio Pojoaque.

<sup>c</sup> Production from Buckman Well Field beginning 2008 under normal operation conditions.

the County's service area. Communities and landowners who currently rely on over-stressed ground water resources could switch to supplies or add supplemental supplies from water from the proposed new diversion.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of Sediment Facility Alternatives**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** The effects on ground water for the sediment facility alternatives would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of Pipeline Route Alternatives**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** The effects on ground water for the pipeline route would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** The effects on ground water for Alternative AGP1 would be the same as those associated with the Proposed Action.

### **Cumulative Effects**

The response of ground water levels to reduced pumping of the Buckman Well Field, coupled with surface diversion from the Rio Grande, can be considered to be a cumulative effect. The City is currently required to offset or mitigate depletions of flows in the Rio Grande and the Nambe, Tesuque, Pojoaque river system that occur as a result of pumping from the Buckman Well Field. After switching to use of the diversion, even with substantially reduced pumping from the wells, the City would be required to provide residual offsets of flows from past pumping from the Buckman Well Field. Future offsets would be provided from releases of currently stored San Juan-Chama water, leased or purchased San Juan-Chama water, native water, or currently owned native water rights. The offset amount is currently about 2,600 ac-ft/yr and would decrease in the future as Buckman well pumping would be decreased when the diversion would come online. Once the diversion is online, the required Rio Grande offsets for Buckman Well Field pumping (historical and future) would be met through one or more of the following:

- Existing City-owned native Rio Grande rights
- Releases of previously stored San Juan-Chama water from upstream reservoirs
- Lease or purchase of additional San Juan-Chama or native Rio Grande water

No other projects that would affect ground water within the aquifer are reasonably foreseeable. Therefore, no other cumulative effects have been identified at this time.

### **Biological Resources**

The following analyses address the plant communities and wildlife present in the project area and the likely effects that would occur from implementation of the proposed project and alternatives. The primary areas of effect are the diversion site at the Rio Grande, Buckman Road improvements, all associated treatment and pumping facility sites, and pipeline corridors. Conditions and potential effects to aquatic species are addressed for the local Rio Grande reach directly adjacent to the proposed water diversion site. The Rio Grande reach from Cochiti Dam to the headwaters of Elephant Butte Reservoir potentially inhabited by the Rio Grande silvery minnow is addressed in the section, "Rio Grande Silvery Minnow," later in this chapter.

## Terrestrial Communities

### Affected Environment

**Plant Communities.** Two major plant communities occur within the project region—the Flood Plains-Plains Riparian along the Rio Grande and the Juniper Savanna, which encompasses most of the remaining area (Dick-Peddie 1993). Both of these communities have been altered, to various extents, from their natural composition and stature by a range of disturbances including suppression of naturally occurring fires, surface developments, livestock grazing, off-road vehicle use, reduced surface water flow, and the invasion of exotic plant species. The Juniper Savanna is characterized by a relative low density of trees (130 per acre) within grassland. The canopy of this region is generally open, except for scattered clusters of closely spaced trees, particularly in the Diablo Canyon area and hillsides. This community type has been expanding throughout New Mexico over the last 150 years—grasslands have been altered or lost in response to intensive grazing; and the frequency and intensity of fires has been dramatically decreased. Within the project area, the ground cover is approximately 60 percent and generally does not support the fine fuels (herbaceous plants) necessary to carry a wildfire. Within the proposed project locale, elevations range from 5,700 feet at the Rio Grande to 6,500 feet at the Airport Road terminus.

Near the diversion point at the Rio Grande, vegetation consists of a dense, narrow band of mixed native and nonnative riparian vegetation. Woody species in this area include saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*), cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), and coyote willow (*Salix exigua*). Major components of the understory are forbs and grasses such as field mint (*Mentha arvensis*), spreading dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*), and fescue grass (*Bromus catharticus*). As the proposed project route progresses inland, vegetation changes somewhat to include plants that are only partially dependent on near surface ground water. These plants include New Mexico olive (*Forestiera neomexicana*), sweet clover (*Melilotus officianalis*, *M. alba*), New Mexico locust (*Robinia neomexicana*), camphorweed (*Heterotheca subaxillaris*), and lemonade bush (*Rhus trilobata*). Within the project corridor, and southeast of the riparian and semiriparian areas along the Rio Grande, is the flood plain of the lower Cañada Ancha. This area is subjected to intense pressure from cattle grazing and human activities such as off-road driving, refuse dumping, and camping. This broad, open flood plain is dominated by rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*, *E. depressus*) and the ubiquitous disturbance shrub, snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*). Other plants in this association include Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), and two species of globemallow (*Sphaeralcea angustifolia*, *S. incana*).

Once out of the flood plain, the pipeline route enters the Savanna community where one-seeded juniper (*Juniperus monosperma*) becomes the most common tree species. Other woody vegetation includes piñon pine (*Pinus edulis*), yucca (*Yucca glauca*), tree cholla (*Opuntia imbricata*), sand sage (*Artemisia filifolia*), and rabbitbrush. Since the site-specific vegetation survey was conducted for this proposal, there has been substantial die-off of piñon pine in the area. Mortality of piñon pine is the result of drought and infestation of bark beetle. Approximately 60 to 90 percent of the piñon pine in the project area is either dead or dying.

At Dead Dog Well the pipeline corridor splits, with one route continuing southeast toward Las Campanas. Within the low density residential area of Las Campanas, and removed from grazing pressure, the pipeline corridor contains many more forbs and grasses. Plants encountered in this area include winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), side-oats

grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), peppergrass (*Lepidium montanum*), sweet clover, and annual wildflowers such as yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Palmer's penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*), and coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*).

The other leg of the route continues south at Dead Dog Well and follows a utility corridor to the proposed MRC WTP and continues into the City of Santa Fe. The first mile of this route has little ground cover because of its proximity to a cattle watering and holding area. Shrubby plants such as saltbush, rabbitbrush, and snakeweed are the most common species in this area. Farther along the utility corridor, juniper, piñon pine, and yucca dominate, while grama grasses are found in scattered clumps in the understory. The treated water pipeline routes from the MRC to Booster Station 3 all support similar vegetation communities previously described. Once reaching Caja del Rio Road, the proposed pipeline route follows along the western edge of the road ROW to the Highway 599 frontage road, where it again forks into two separate routes. The eastern distribution route follows Caja del Rio Road for three-quarters of a mile before it crosses Highway 599. From this point, it follows two-track roads and dirt easements south across the ephemeral Santa Fe River where it intersects with an existing water distribution system at Airport Road. Though fairly common throughout the entire project area, weedy species particularly dominate the savanna south of Highway 599. Plants in this area include juniper, sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), gumweed (*Grindelia nuda*), weed verbena (*Verbena bracteata*), kochia (*Kochia scoparia*), nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*), and grasses such as three-awn (*Aristida longiseta*) and bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*). Plant species at the crossing of the Santa Fe River are limited to a few small saltcedar, Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), and coyote willow.

The western distribution route follows the western edge of Highway 599 to connect with existing County water pipelines located at the intersection of the I-25 frontage road and Erica Road. The route traverses through disturbed industrial areas and roadway ROWs that support little native vegetation. Conditions and vegetation communities observed on this leg are similar to those on the eastern distribution leg. Sunflowers, gumweed, three-awn grass, bluestem, Russian thistle, Siberian elm, nightshade, and weed verbena were encountered along this route. Species at the Santa Fe River crossing include saltcedar, coyote willow, Siberian elm, and a few cottonwood saplings.

There are two general types of washes encountered along the proposed project route. The first type is the low lying wash that has not been subjected to recent flash floods. These have denser stands of vegetation, including juniper and rabbitbrush, than surrounding upland areas. The second type of wash is the sandy, open, scoured arroyo. These areas support relatively few plants and only annuals such as scurfpea (*Psoraleidium lanceolatum*) and clammyweed (*Polanisia dodecandra*) were found.

***Nonnative Invasive Plant Species.*** Nonnative invasive species of plants and animals are emerging worldwide as one of the leading threats to native species, ecosystem processes, and biodiversity. The introduction of nonnative invasive species can result in the elimination of native species through predation, competition, genetic modification, and disease transmission. Three classes of invasive weeds have been delineated in New Mexico. Class A weeds are those which are not native to an ecosystem and have a limited distribution. Class A weeds receive the highest priority for attention, since their limited distribution provides potential for success in removing current infestations and preventing future spread. Weed species that have yet to invade New Mexico are also labeled as Class A weeds. Class B weeds are not native to the ecosystem in which they occur and are limited to specific areas in New Mexico. Management emphasis is

given to containing these weeds to their current range and keeping such plants from spreading into new areas. Class C weeds are nonnative to the ecosystem in which they occur but are widespread throughout New Mexico. The development of long-term programs which deal with the management and suppression of these invaders are necessary to achieve any degree of success. Nonnative invasive plant species present along with their New Mexico designation, if any, within the project area include: Canadian thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) – Class A; cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria genistifolia* spp. *dalmatica*) – Class A; yellow toadflax (*L. vulgaris*) – Class A; Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) – Class C; salt cedar – Class C; and Russian olive – Class C. The Santa Fe National Forest is analyzing a proposal to control, contain or eradicate invasive plant species throughout the forest. The draft EIS for that project was released to the public in June 2004.

**Wildlife.** Because of previous and existing effects from alteration of the natural fire regime, livestock grazing, developments, and other human uses, the proposed project area does not support high quality nesting, denning, foraging, or hunting habitat for wildlife other than reptiles (i.e., snakes and lizards). At the Rio Grande water diversion site the quality of riparian wildlife habitat is reduced due to the presence of primarily nonnative species, such as salt cedar and Russian olive, and disturbance by human activities (i.e., shooting, off-highway vehicle use, and assemblage of weekend partygoers). It should be noted that in New Mexico, at least 80 percent of all animals use riparian areas at some stage of their lives, with more than half of these considered to be riparian obligates (BLM 1999). Additionally, the Rio Grande is a main corridor for migratory birds moving from wintering grounds to breeding grounds and vice versa. Higher quality habitat is present both upstream and downstream of the proposed diversion site. These areas could provide suitable habitat for a more diverse population of avian species such as the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) and yellow-bellied cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*).

Inland from the Rio Grande, the area is habitat for a variety of bird species, including raptors and small game animals, such as jackrabbits (*Lepus californicus*). However, these species generally do not occur in high enough numbers for the area to be considered an important game region. Large game species, such as mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), are present. However, the project area does not contain any critical seasonal denning or foraging areas. It has been suggested that frequent disturbances, such as firearms discharges, within the vicinity of the proposed project area have reduced the number of species utilizing the area (Orr 2002). Within the City of Santa Fe there is an isolated and small colony of Gunnison's prairie dogs (*Cynomys gunnisoni*) along South Meadow Road at the southwest terminus of the pipeline. There were no prairie dog den sites within the previously graded pipeline ROW during the time of the project specific biological survey conducted in August 2002. Mammalian species that could be expected to utilize all undeveloped habitats are representative of the region. These species include: mule deer, raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), jackrabbit, cottontail rabbits (*Sylvilagus* species), woodrats (*Neotoma ssp.*), and deer mice (*Onychomys ssp.*). Predatory species would include: black bear (*Ursus americanus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), fox (*Vulpes* species), mountain lions (*Felis concolor*), and skunks (*Mephitis* species). Human activities and hunting pressure within the Rio Grande corridor have kept large and predatory mammal populations at fairly low levels. However, this region is still a very important refuge for large and small mammals in New Mexico (BIA 2000).

## **Environmental Consequences**

The following methodology and assumptions were used to calculate the number of acres temporarily or permanently affected by implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives. Table 1 contains more detailed information regarding surface area disturbance calculations.

Permanent loss of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat would occur with the construction of the diversion structure, Buckman Road improvements, sediment facility and associated Booster Station 1A, MRC WTP and associated Booster Stations 4A and 5A, Las Campanas WTP and pipelines, and Booster Stations 2A and 3A. The area occupied by the new structures or areas fenced or converted to other uses would result in the loss of approximately 59 acres. Acreage affected by pipeline construction is considered a temporary effect to biotic communities because the plant communities would be allowed to recover after construction is completed.

Temporary loss of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat would occur within the work limits for the construction of the diversion structure, Buckman Road improvements, sediment facility and associated Booster Station 1A, MRC WTP and associated Booster Stations 4A and 5A, Las Campanas WTP, Booster Stations 2A and 3A, and all associated pipelines. The area temporarily affected would be approximately 247 acres. It should be noted that while these areas would be allowed to revegetate either through a project specific revegetation program or allowed to revegetate naturally, tree reestablishment would not be allowed within the pipeline corridors due to maintenance considerations. However, the ecological function of the area would largely revert back to pre-construction conditions.

Total acreage potentially affected by the Proposed Action is 306 acres of which 59 acres would be permanently lost and 247 acres temporarily affected. These are the acreage figures that will be used to compare the effects from the Proposed Action to other project alternatives.

### **No Action Alternative**

Under this alternative there would be no construction or operation of the diversion structure, Buckman Road improvements, booster stations, WTPs, and pipeline conveyance system. There would be no loss or modification of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

#### ***Plant Communities***

**Construction Effects.** Loss of vegetation would occur as a result of the construction activities for the diversion structure, Buckman Road improvements, booster stations, WTPs, and pipeline conveyance system. Construction of the intake structure, booster stations, Las Campanas pipelines, and WTPs would result in the permanent loss of approximately 59 acres of vegetation. Additionally, modification or clearing of vegetation for facility work area construction boundaries and preparation of pipeline corridors would likely affect an additional 247 acres. The proposed treated water pipeline would result in vegetation clearance or alteration to approximately 17 acres of the 247 acres (based on a 40-foot construction corridor and a pipeline length of 18,113 feet). For these areas temporarily disturbed, the vegetation would be reestablished through the native plant revegetation program and, therefore, represents a potential short-term affect (see further discussion below under “Operation Effects”). Construction disturbed areas, not lost to facilities or other infrastructure, could have a minor increase in plant diversity and density; as the barren and hard soil conditions would be loosened and the surface roughened creating favorable colonization sites. The proposed mitigation to conduct, prior to construction, a survey for invasive plants



species and, where found, their eradication would serve to minimize or prevent establishment of invasive plants due to construction-altered habitat. Eradication of invasive plants would be performed through use of mechanical and/or chemical control methods. The Santa Fe National Forest prepared a draft EIS that addresses weed control methods. The final “Weeds” EIS and Record of Decision will be published in late 2004 or early 2005. All weed control methods for the Buckman Water Diversion Project on FS lands would be compliant with the stipulations and guidelines presented in the Weeds EIS Record of Decision, and for BLM lands, Executive Order 13112 Invasive Species along with the National Invasive Species Council’s National Management Plan for Invasive Species.

**Operation Effects.** Arguably, the most severe potential effect of the project is the opportunity for nonnative invasive species expansion in construction-affected areas. Through implementation of the native plant revegetation mitigation program, nonnative invasive species such as salt cedar, Russian olive, and Dalmatian toadflax would have a reduced influence in the areas where project construction activities occur. At the Rio Grande diversion site, which is characterized by a dense, narrow band of mixed native and nonnative riparian vegetation, revegetation with cottonwood and coyote willow would improve the local and native riparian communities. Short-term revegetation success is highly probable at the Rio Grande diversion site due to near surface water availability. However, long-term success may not occur given the highly invasive and opportunistic nature of these nonnative and invasive plant species unless: salt cedar and Russian olive are eradicated in areas closely adjacent to the diversion site; a monitoring and re-establishment prevention program is conducted for several years; and the area is managed to prevent effects to vegetation and soils from human activities (i.e., no vehicle use or camping in areas undergoing revegetation). These long-term success factors would be incorporated as stipulations of the special use permit.

Similarly, implementation of the native plant revegetation mitigation program that includes eradication of nonnative invasive species, such as toadflax, in other project-affected areas would result in stabilizing and improving the plant diversity and health of existing plant communities. However, for successful implementation of the native plant revegetation program, climatic conditions have to be favorable (frequency and quantity of rain), domestic grazing controlled, and the area managed and protected from other inappropriate uses (off-highway vehicles) until the area successfully revegetates. Even with less than full success, the use of mulch coupled with the re-establishment of some plant cover will provide a level of protection against wind and waterborne soil erosion. These practices would retain favorable circumstances for plant germination and growth when climatic conditions are favorable.

Implementation of Buckman Road improvements may have minor but beneficial effects to watershed health (see section, “Geology and Soils, Affected Environment” later in this chapter). Better storm water distribution and decreased erosion could result in increased vegetative cover in some areas downslope of Buckman Road. While speculative, the road improvements could result in more visitation and use of the area resulting in increased pressures on natural resources.

### **Wildlife**

**Construction Effects.** Approximately 306 acres of wildlife habitat would likely be temporarily or permanently affected during construction. Two hundred seventy-nine acres of construction-affected habitat would be allowed to revert back to its previous condition. During site clearing activities, highly mobile wildlife species or wildlife species with large home ranges (such as deer

and birds) would be able to relocate to adjacent undeveloped areas. However, successful relocation may not occur due to competition for resources to support the increased population and the carrying capacity limitations of areas outside the proposed development. Species relocation may result in additional pressure to lands already at or near carrying capacity. The effects could include overgrazing (in the case of herbivores), stress, and over-wintering mortality. For less mobile species (reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals), direct mortality could occur during the actual construction event or ultimately result from habitat alteration. These effects would be minor given the amount of habitat affected compared to available habitat. No species population is expected to be adversely affected.

**Operation Effects.** Implementation of the native plant revegetation program, soil protection techniques, and wildlife mitigation measures would serve to minimize the long-term effects to wildlife habitat. Implementation of Buckman Road improvements, while resulting in a very minor decrease in habitat, may have a small but beneficial effect to watershed health thus resulting in improved wildlife habitat. While speculative, roadway improvements could result in an increase in visitor use thus potentially affecting wildlife use and behavior in the project area.

Successful implementation of the revegetation control program would result in improvement to riparian habitat along the Rio Grande and provide minor habitat improvement elsewhere in the project region. Additionally, the soil and wildlife mitigation stipulations to: mulch one-seed juniper and piñon pine that are removed; lop and scatter of larger diameter branches and tree trunks for mitigating soil erosion; and for wildlife benefit, consolidate tree material into dispersed (or otherwise removed from the general vicinity of construction and human disturbance) slash piles no higher than 2 feet would, over the long-term, improve the general wildlife habitat in the local area. The 59 acres converted to facilities and other infrastructure would be permanently lost as potential predator hunting habitat and foraging or hiding cover for other wildlife species. Given the current hard pack soil conditions there is little opportunity for colonization by new plants. Ground disturbance, as a result of construction activities primarily associated with pipeline burial, should produce more favorable conditions for rodents to establish new burrows, and an increased prey base in some areas. However, there would be a concurrent decrease in quality of the habitat immediately adjacent to facilities due to increased noise levels, traffic, lights, and other human activity. The adjacent habitat also would experience a loss of quality from the reduction in size, segmentation of the habitat, and restriction on mobility for some species (Kelley and Rotenberry 1993). These effects, however, would be minor and no species population would be adversely affected.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

The construction and operation effects are similar to the Proposed Action with the following exceptions.

**Construction Effects.** Alternatives SF1 and SF2 would require construction in a primarily piñon pine/juniper community compared to a degraded grassland/forb community under the Proposed Action. Alternative SF1 sediment return line would be longer and, compared to the Proposed Action, would result in the short-term disturbance of approximately 3 additional acres. Short-term effects from construction of a return pipeline would be avoided under Alternative SF2 as the coarse sediment would be hauled by truck to the Caja del Rio Landfill instead of returned to the Rio Grande (aquatic organism effects are discussed in the previous section, “Terrestrial Communities”).

**Operation Effects.** Alternative SF2 would require trucking out sand from the sediment facility. Episodic and increased truck traffic could result in short-term wildlife avoidance of the Buckman Road corridor. However, the effects would be negligible and of short duration and over time the wildlife populations would habituate to changes in road traffic.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

The construction and operation effects are similar to the Proposed Action with the following exceptions.

**Construction and Operational Effects.** Alternative TWP1 would require construction and operation of the treated water pipeline in a new ROW corridor along BLM and Las Campanas lands. Approximately 17 acres would be affected by construction of Alternative TWP1, which is about the same as the Proposed Action. Alternative TWP2 would install the treated water pipeline back along the Dead Dog Well corridor and then cut east and would affect approximately 20 acres, some of which would be in a new ROW corridor. Alternative TWP3 would use approximately 27 acres of existing utility line ROW. Construction and establishment of a new pipeline corridor or construction in an existing corridor would result in the minor and short-term removal of vegetation and subsequent reduction in the foraging, hunting, and cover habitat for wildlife. The construction-affected areas would be revegetated. However, establishment of trees in the pipeline corridor would be prevented due to maintenance considerations. Additionally, development of a new corridor could encourage increased recreational use in the area and subsequent degradation to vegetation and wildlife habitat.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrades at the Buckman transformer station. Land would be required for either of the new substation sites for construction and operation. This acreage would be converted from existing plant communities and wildlife habitat to an area occupied by facilities and landscaping.

However, avian mortality does occur as a result of electrocution and collision with power lines. The New Mexico Avian Protection Working Group was formed in early 2002 to address this issue in New Mexico. Founding members include representatives from PNM, the Rural Utility Services, Hawks Aloft, the New Mexico Falconers Association, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Their goal is to work cooperatively with New Mexico utilities to voluntarily reduce impacts to raptors and other migratory birds by utilizing more cost efficient methods to obtain data, and identify and address problem areas in New Mexico. Additionally, in July 16, 2003 the FWS issued a press release announcing that new voluntary guidelines for protecting birds from electrocution and collisions with power lines are now being developed by the FWS and the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee that promise improved safeguards for migratory birds. Electrocutions and line strikes are a particular threat to birds with large wingspans, such as eagles, hawks, and owls—all species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Avian interactions with power lines also cause power outages, which represent added cost and inconvenience for electric utilities and their customers. The new guidelines will give electric utilities a framework to use in developing a voluntary Avian Protection Plan tailored to their specific operations. The Avian Protection Plan guidance document, which will be published on the FWS and Avian Power Line Interaction Committee Web sites, will reference the latest industry standards for preventing avian power line interactions, including recommendations from

the most current edition of Avian Power Line Interaction Committee “Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines.” Should the power upgrade alternative (AGP1a or AGP1b) be selected, then the FS and BLM would recommend the power line be constructed to be compatible with the current Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) “Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996” and FWS guidelines for protection of avian species from electrocution and line strike.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Under the Proposed Action and alternatives there would be a permanent loss of approximately 59 acres which would be additive to the continuing habitat loss within lands contiguous with or in close proximity to the Buckman Project area in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and Los Alamos Counties, as well as, San Ildefonso Pueblo lands. Habitat loss is primarily a result of new road construction (NM 284/85), housing development, and increasing recreation use of public lands.

### **Aquatic Communities**

#### **Affected Environment**

Aquatic habitat at the proposed Rio Grande diversion site consists of main channel runs and limited pool habitat. Gravel and cobble riffles and bars are located upstream and downstream of the proposed project site.

Fish sampling (electro-shock) was conducted in August 2002 adjacent to the diversion site in the eddy, shoreline run, and mainstem run habitats. Silt, sand, gravel, cobble, boulder, and vegetation substrates were sampled. All fishes were identified and measured before being released.

A total of seven fish species—brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), white sucker (*Catostomus commersoni*), common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), flathead chub (*Platygobio gracilis*), longnose dace (*Rhinichthys cataractae*), channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*), and smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*)—were captured during the sampling effort. Of these seven species, only the flathead chub and longnose dace are considered native to the Rio Grande in New Mexico. The white sucker and flathead chub were the most abundant fish collected. Review of available literature related to past fisheries sampling indicates that the sampling effort collected all species documented for the project area with the exception of Rio Grande cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki virginalis*), Rio Grande sucker (*Catostomus plebeius*), and the Rio Grande chub (*Gila pandora*). The Rio Grande cutthroat trout prefers clear, silt-free water in cold streams and lakes with gravel beds, and the Rio Grande sucker is rarely found in waters with heavy loads of silt and organic detritus. Thus, both species are highly unlikely to inhabit the project area. The Rio Grande chub prefers impoundments and pools of small to moderate streams and is frequently associated with aquatic vegetation. It may be an infrequent component of the fish population in the project area. Similar sampling results were obtained from a fisheries inventory at San Ildefonso that identified white sucker, common carp, brown trout, longnose dace, flathead chub, and channel catfish (BIA 2000).

None of the species captured in this stretch of the Rio Grande have drifting eggs. However, two of the species collected—white sucker and longnose dace—do have drifting larvae. The opinion of project aquatic biologists is that these drifting larvae are relatively large and are probably able to control their movements to some extent.

No amphibians, including tadpoles (immature aquatic life stage for frogs and toads), were observed during the field survey conducted specifically for the Buckman Project. Field survey locations included the bank, pool habitat, and main channel of the Rio Grande at the water diversion site. Water velocities in the main channel are too high to meet habitat requirements for relatively poor swimming tadpoles. No appropriate frog habitat exists inland of the Rio Grande within the project area.

## **Environmental Consequences**

### ***No Action Alternative***

Under this alternative there would be no construction or operation of the water diversion structure, booster stations, sediment facility, and associated return flow pipeline. Therefore, there would be no effects from construction of a cofferdam and no modification or loss of aquatic habitat and adjacent riverside vegetation.

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action***

**Construction Effects.** During cofferdam construction and demolition, localized increases in turbidity would occur. Aquatic fauna in the area would be temporarily affected during these activities. Aquatic fauna would be expected to temporarily vacate the locality of increased turbidity. Benthic invertebrates (primarily aquatic insects) in the area would be killed. Given the limited area affected, no aquatic species' population is expected to be permanently affected. The cofferdam, once constructed, would mitigate the most severe siltation effects from construction of the water diversion structure.

**Operation Effects.** The Buckman Project diversion structure and water intake screens are designed, using standard engineering fish screening criteria, to avoid entrainment of fish eggs and juveniles. The design flow is 32 cfs with an approach velocity of 0.33 feet per second (typical California criteria for small fish) and a sweeping velocity (velocity parallel to screens) and transport time past the screens of 18 seconds. Fish screens would have a mesh size of 2mm. The actual impacts to fish species from operations are unknown, however, the following impact assessment is based on the professional opinion of the Buckman Project aquatic biologists. Even with the design mitigations, entrainment of juvenile fish will occur. These impacts to the aquatic food web would be minimal and it is extremely unlikely that there would be any measurable change in the biotic organization (change in fish population ratios) of the river. None of the species captured in this stretch of the Rio Grande have drifting eggs. Thus, the effect of a diversion structure on these species by entrainment of eggs is likely to be negligible. As for larval fishes, Rio Grande chub, white suckers and longnose dace have drifting larvae. However, the white sucker and longnose dace are very abundant in this reach and given that larval fishes usually experience very high natural mortality rates, a slight increase, if any, in mortality from water diversion structure entrainment would likely be immeasurable. The Rio Grande chub has larvae that drift for a short period, thus a diversion structure could entrain drifting larvae of this species. Given the project design and potentially low densities of Rio Grande chub in the area, and the fact that it has not been collected during recent surveys, it is not likely that the proposed project would have a discernable impact on the species' population. BLM has implemented a "Rio Grande Aquatic Species Monitoring Program." The data gathered from this program would be used in the future to assess changing conditions as a result of proposed or altered water release regimes and river water diversion activities.

There could be limited, localized effects from sediment returned to the river. However, the Rio Grande normally carries a very high sediment load and the return of a small fraction of the sediment contained in the diverted water would likely have a very small impact on downstream fish or invertebrate communities. The very localized effects to aquatic habitat would have no measurable impact to fish or macroinvertebrate communities in the immediate project area. Most of the sediments would be mobilized and moved out of the project area during high flows that occur during spring runoff, storm water runoff, and release of San Juan-Chama waters. Further, the river immediately downstream of the project area rapidly shifts to a sand dominated system and the species located in the project area are adapted to these conditions. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that a highly localized and minimal (less than 1 percent under most operating conditions) increase in sediment concentrations in the river would cause a shift in the downstream fish assemblage or habitat conditions. The downstream fish community is already dominated by nonnative habitat generalists (common carp, channel catfish, and white suckers) that are well adapted to naturally occurring sand bed habitats that exist downstream of the project area. Implementation of Buckman Road improvements may have very minor but beneficial effects. Better storm water distribution and decreased erosion from Buckman Road could result in decreased sediment loads reaching the Rio Grande from localized storm events.

Water diversion quantities would be quite small compared to normal flow rates and the water diversion would be inoperable in extremely low flow conditions (150 cfs or less). Therefore, adverse effects to the aquatic communities in the Rio Grande reach from the Buckman diversion site to Cochiti Dam would be minimal and not imperil either aquatic species populations or change the composition of the aquatic community. Diversion of 1,350 ac-ft/yr of native water may affect the Rio Grande silvery minnow downstream of Cochiti Dam. The likely effects to the silvery minnow are addressed in the “Special Status Species” section that follows.

#### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives***

The construction and operational effects are similar to the Proposed Action with the following exceptions.

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Under Alternative SF2 there would be no return of sediment to the Rio Grande. The potential effects identified for sediment return consequences under the Proposed Action would not occur.

#### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives***

There is no difference in effects to aquatic species or communities from the Proposed Action compared to the pipeline route alternatives.

#### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative***

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

#### **Cumulative Effects**

Water diversion projects, especially those proposed by the City of Espanola and City of Albuquerque, are additive with the Buckman Project. Overall, due to the quantity of San Juan-Chama diversion water that would be released, the reach from storage at Heron Reservoir to the City of Albuquerque’s proposed Paseo del Norte diversion site would receive higher consistent year-round flow. Resource management agencies do not have trend, aquatic populations, or

habitat data in which to quantify or assess the potential cumulative impacts resulting from municipality diversions of San Juan-Chama waters. Reclamation, USACE, and NMISC are currently preparing an Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS. This EIS may recommend or conduct studies that will obtain the necessary data to monitor impacts on aquatic species from future water operations. However, because effects from the proposed Buckman Water Diversion Project to aquatic species are not expected to be measurable, no discernable cumulative impacts are forecast (as discussed in the following section, “Special Status Species”).

## Special Status Species

Special status species are defined as those plants and animals protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act, New Mexico State endangered and threatened species protected under the New Mexico Conservation Act and lists maintained by the BLM and FS. Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act requires Federal agencies to obtain information from the FWS regarding any species—listed or proposed for listing—that could be affected by the proposed project. A complete literature search was used to construct a list of special interest plant and animal species known to occur in Santa Fe County. Species status was based upon lists maintained by the FWS, BLM, FS, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council, and the New Mexico Natural Heritage Program. Specific habitat requirements for each of the target species presented by these State and Federal agencies were used to construct a working list of species that might occur within the general project vicinity. Additionally, project biologists participated in discussions with the FWS, conducted field surveys, and collected habitat and taxonomic information for each listed species from a variety of sources.

Species afforded consideration under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and Santa Fe National Forest Plan Management Indicator Species are also addressed. Mitigation or considerations are provided for these species as well as the special status species found in Table 13.

The project area was surveyed, including fish sampling, by qualified biologists between July and August 2002 to determine the habitat suitability of the project area for special status species. The presence or the potential for occurrence based on habitat requirements for special status species or its obligate habitat was noted during these surveys. A general assessment of the area was made based on vegetation health, composition, stature, and consideration of disturbance activities, such as grazing and off-highway vehicle use. Potential nesting or burrowing sites, such as sandy hillsides, rock outcroppings, or clusters of trees or shrubs, were examined for the presence of wildlife.

Effects to the Rio Grande silvery minnow are presented separately due to the public and regulatory interest in the effects to this Federally-listed endangered species. The other special status species are described and effects assessed following the silvery minnow presentation.

**Table 13. Santa Fe County special status plants and animals that could occur within the project area.**

Common Name  (Scientific Name)	Status				Species Information  Habitat Requirements
	FWS	FS	BLM	NM	
<b>PLANTS</b>					
Santa Fe cholla ( <i>Opuntia viridiflora</i> )	SC	–	S	E	Currently, this species is known only from Fort Marcy Park in Santa Fe and in the Pojoaque area. General habitat consists of gravelly rolling hills in piñon-juniper woodlands. Specimens were not found during field surveys.
Santa Fe milkvetch ( <i>Astragalus feensis</i> )	–	–	–	SC	Habitat requirements are gravelly hillsides in piñon-juniper grasslands. There may be small pockets of suitable habitat for this species within the proposed project area. This species was not found during field surveys.
<b>FISH</b>					
Flathead chub ( <i>Platygobio gracilis</i> )	–	–	S	–	Habitat requirements consist of turbid, alkaline waters with shifting substrates. This species is common near the proposed diversion site and was the second most abundant species captured during the sampling effort.
Rio Grande chub ( <i>Gila pandora</i> )	–	–	–	S	Habitat requirements consist of impoundments of small to moderate streams. Although it was not collected in recent surveys of the Rio Grande near the proposed diversion site, it is possible that the chub does occur in this stretch of river at low densities or intermittently.
Rio Grande silvery minnow ( <i>Hybognathus amarus</i> )	E	(S)	–	(E)	The Rio Grande silvery minnow is a FWS endangered species that requires silt and sand substrates with slow backwaters or eddies. The species appears to be extirpated from the reach containing the diversion site. It is potentially present from below Cochiti Dam to the headwaters of Elephant Butte Reservoir. (See the section on “Rio Grande Silvery Minnow.”)
<b>REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS</b>					
Desert kingsnake ( <i>Lampropeltis getula splendida</i> )	–	S	–	–	The desert kingsnake prefers riparian and grassland habitats in New Mexico but is also found in piñon-juniper and low desert areas. This snake uses rock outcroppings or mammal burrows to escape midday heat. It is likely to occur in the project area.
Northern leopard frog ( <i>Rana pipiens</i> )	–	S	–	–	This species is found along the entire length of the Rio Grande. It is mainly found in streams and rivers, but also occurs in marshes, ponds, and irrigation ditches. It was not found during project surveys.
<b>BIRDS</b>					
Bald eagle ( <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> )	T	S	–	T	The bald eagle is a winter migrant along the Rio Grande. Most of the preferred roost sites are in snags and cliffs along the river in the section between Bandelier National Monument and the Cochiti Reservoir delta.



Common Name		Status				Species Information
(Scientific Name)	FWS	FS	BLM	NM	Habitat Requirements	
Gray vireo ( <i>Vireo vicinior</i> )	–	S	–	T	In New Mexico, gray vireos are found sporadically throughout the State where it is considered uncommon. Gray vireos inhabit juniper woodlands in arid foothills and on mesas. Juniper woodlands are abundant within and contiguous with the project site. It was not found during project specific surveys. However, a biological survey for PNM Project Power study did record the species in the general vicinity.	
Loggerhead shrike ( <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> )	–	–	S	–	This bird utilizes a variety of habitats including desert scrub and open grasslands, though it prefers to nest in trees of medium to tall height. Loggerhead shrikes are fairly common year-round residents throughout Santa Fe County. Individuals of this species were seen in the general vicinity of the proposed project route. The entire proposed project area contains suitable nesting habitat for this species.	
Mountain plover ( <i>Charadrius montanus</i> )	–	S	–	S	Mountain plovers are considered to be strongly associated with sites of heaviest grazing pressure to the point of excessive surface disturbance. Their nesting sites are dominated by short vegetation and bare ground, often with manure piles or rocks nearby. Suitable habitat is present in the proposed project area.	
Western burrowing owl ( <i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i> )	SC	–	S	–	This species' habitat requirements are open grasslands, prairies, and desert scrub. It occurs as a summer resident and is fairly common in Santa Fe County. This owl typically nests in abandoned mammal burrows. This owl is frequently found in close proximity to human activities and is often associated with prairie dog towns, one of which occurs immediately adjacent to the proposed project ROW.	
Zone-tailed hawk ( <i>Buteo albonotatus</i> )	–	S	–	–	The zone-tailed hawk is found in Montane woodlands and mesas, often near waterways, and is present in White Rock Canyon and documented in Bandelier National Monument.	
<b>MAMMALS</b>						
Gunnison's prairie dog ( <i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i> )	–	–	–	S	Gunnison's prairie dog habitat consists of open grasslands from low valleys to montane meadows. A small colony of prairie dogs is located adjacent to the proposed project route along South Meadow Road at the southwest terminus of the pipeline. Chapter 14 Section 14-8.12 of the City of Santa Fe's Code contains the Gunnison's prairie dog relocation regulations to protect the diminishing populations of Gunnison's prairie dogs by ensuring their safe and humane relocation prior to the development of property within the City of Santa Fe to appropriate and protected habitat areas as designated by the City.	

Common Name  (Scientific Name)	Status				Species Information
	FWS	FS	BLM	NM	Habitat Requirements
Red fox ( <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> )	–	–	–	S	The red fox is known in the State primarily from the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Where present, it is commonly found in relatively open areas or adjacent to urbanized or agricultural lands. No foxes or dens were detected during the field survey. There is a small chance that red fox may hunt or den within the proposed project area.
Ringtail ( <i>Bassariscus astutus</i> )	–	S	–	S	This species, though seldom seen, is fairly common throughout most of New Mexico. These nocturnal, raccoon-like carnivores inhabit a variety of rocky, broken terrains at low- to mid-elevations. There may be limited suitable habitat for this species within the pipeline corridor.
Western spotted skunk ( <i>Spilogale gracilis</i> )	–	–	–	S	This species has been recorded in Santa Fe County and can occur in many habitats including lower montane, mixed shrub, sagebrush, piñon-juniper, wetland, and riparian areas. They generally use rocky areas for denning sites. Potential habitat may exist in the proposed project area, but occurrence of this species is unlikely.

Status designations are: Endangered (E), Threatened (T), Sensitive (S), and Species of Concern (SC). Table designations in parentheses are listed by the agency for New Mexico, but not specifically for Santa Fe County.

(Source: Much of the information contained in this table was obtained from the New Mexico Game and Fish BISON-M, Biota Information System of New Mexico Web site at <http://nmnhp.unm.edu/bisonm/bisonquery.php>.)

### Rio Grande Silvery Minnow

The silvery minnow is the only surviving small, native pelagic spawning minnow in the middle Rio Grande (FWS 2003a). It is herbivorous, feeding primarily on algae, and travels in schools. The silvery minnow tolerates a wide range of habitats but generally prefers low velocity areas over silt or sand substrate that are associated with shallow braided runs, backwaters or pools. They spawn in about a 1-month period in late spring to early summer (May to June) in response to spring runoff. Spawning occurs in the water column and its eggs, approximately 3,000 to 6,000 per adult female, subsequently drift passively downstream with the current (FWS 2003b).

Reduction in the range of the Rio Grande silvery minnow to 5 to 10 percent of historical distribution, and threats to its continued existence in the Middle Rio Grande (outflow of Cochiti Reservoir to the headwaters of Elephant Butte Reservoir, a stretch of approximately 175 river miles) were central to this species being listed as Federally endangered. The silvery minnow was Federally-listed as endangered for the following reasons:

- Regulation of stream waters, which has led to severe flow reductions, often to the point of dewatering extended lengths of stream channel.
- Alteration of the natural hydrograph, which effects the species by disrupting the environmental cues the fish receives for a variety of life functions, including spawning.

- Streamflow reductions and other alterations of the natural hydrograph throughout the year, which can severely impact habitat availability and quality, including the temporal availability of habitats.
- Actions such as channelization, bank stabilization, levee construction, and dredging, resulting in both direct and indirect effects to the silvery minnow and its habitat by severely disrupting natural fluvial processes throughout the flood plain.
- Construction of diversion dams that fragment the habitat and prevent upstream migration.
- Introduction of nonnative fishes that directly compete with the silvery minnow.
- Discharge of contaminants into the stream system from industrial, municipal, and agricultural sources which may also impact the species.

These reasons for listing continue to threaten the species throughout its currently occupied range in the Middle Rio Grande (FWS 2003b).

### **Affected Environment**

The silvery minnow was historically one of the most widespread and abundant fishes in New Mexico. In the Rio Grande, it ranged from the confluence of the Rio Chama near Española to the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Pecos River from near Santa Rosa to its confluence with the Rio Grande. Recent investigations document the presence of the silvery minnow in less than 5 percent of its historic range. It is restricted to the reach from Cochiti Dam to the headwaters of Elephant Butte. No documentation of the silvery minnow above Cochiti Dam has occurred since prior to the construction and operation of Cochiti Dam in the mid-1970s (BOR/City of Albuquerque 2004).

On April 5, 2001, the FWS published in the “Federal Register” (66 FR 18107) a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for designation of critical habitat for the Rio Grande silvery minnow. In February 2003, the FWS issued the final rule and designation of critical habitat for the silvery minnow. The final rule that became effective March 21, 2003, states that the reach upstream of Cochiti Reservoir to the confluence of the Rio Chama and Rio Grande is not designated as critical habitat. The FWS concluded that the habitat for the silvery minnow within this river reach is generally degraded and unsuitable, and is not essential to the conservation of the silvery minnow (FWS 2003a). The EIS addressed the FWS proposal to designate the currently occupied reaches of the Rio Grande in New Mexico as critical habitat for the silvery minnow. Effects of the designation of critical habitat include an increased scope of consultations, which would be expanded to include effects of actions on critical habitat, as well as some changes to the actions to avoid adverse modification. It is likely that efforts would be made to increase the flow in the Rio Grande in areas that now experience drying events. This is a controversial effort to minimize drying events, combined with river restoration activities for the minnow, which if successful, could favorably affect riverine and riparian ecosystems. Designating critical habitat does not, in itself, lead to the survival or recovery of the species. Nevertheless, by identifying areas essential to the conservation of the species, and by requiring consultation, designation provides an opportunity for Federal agencies, the public, and other organizations to collaborate for the protection of needed habitat (FWS 2002).

In January 2000, several parties in the Middle Rio Grande signed a memorandum of understanding to develop a long-term strategy that would assist in the conservation and recovery of the Rio Grande silvery minnow and the southwestern willow flycatcher, while protecting

existing and future water uses. Participation has grown significantly since January 2000 to include additional state agencies, water interests, and Indian Tribes and Pueblos. Key participants include the FWS, Reclamation, USACE, BIA, City of Albuquerque, MRGCD, New Mexico ISC, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and the Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage. The strategy being developed by this group has been termed the Middle Rio Grande Collaborative Program. The Proposed Action area for the program extends from the headwaters of the Rio Chama watershed and the Rio Grande, including all tributaries, from the Colorado/New Mexico state line downstream to the headwaters of Elephant Butte Reservoir (FWS 2002).

In late 2000, the Rio Grande silvery minnow naturalized rearing and breeding project was initiated in response to a lawsuit. It includes the design, construction and operation of a rearing and breeding facility that would ensure the short-term survival and long-term recovery of the silvery minnow. The short-term goal for the facility is to supplement existing captive populations in aquaria. The facility's long-term operations are intended to maintain breeding populations to supplement wild populations; provide fish for reintroduction into portions of their historic range and habitat enhanced range; act as an emergency refuge in times of drought; and provide research opportunities to learn more about the silvery minnow and its habitat preferences (OSE/ISC 2001). The facility is operational. Silvery minnows are currently housed at five facilities in New Mexico: the Dexter National Fish Hatchery; New Mexico State University Coop Unit; Rock Lake State Fish Hatchery; the FWS Fishery Resources Office; and the City of Albuquerque's propagation facilities. These facilities are actively propagating and rearing silvery minnows or are available for propagation. In 2000, the total combined capacity of these facilities was approximately 175,000 silvery minnow juveniles and adults. New facilities are being constructed at the City, the Dexter National Fish Hatchery, and at Fishery Resources Office that would increase the total capacity of all facilities to approximately 500,000 juveniles and adults. Silvery minnows are also held in South Dakota at the USGS, Biological Resources Division Lab, but there is no active spawning program at this facility (FWS 2003b).

### **Environmental Consequences**

Environmental consequences from the Buckman Project upon the silvery minnow would be the result of the diversion of native Rio Grande waters and not the diversion of San Juan-Chama water. San Juan-Chama water is not native to the Rio Grande and was not originally intended to ensure the survival of the silvery minnow. However, it has been purchased in the past to provide water during low flow conditions in the Rio Grande. Potential effects to other special status species are identified in Table 14.

#### ***No Action Alternative***

Under this alternative, there would be no construction and operation of the Buckman Project, thus there would be no diversion of either San Juan-Chama or native Rio Grande waters and there would be no effects to the Rio Grande silvery minnow.

#### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action***

**Construction Effects.** There would be no construction-related effects to the silvery minnow as its habitat area does not occur upstream of Cochiti Dam.

**Operation Effects.** Once the diversion structure is operational, diversion of native Rio Grande water would be a direct and cumulative affect to the Rio Grande silvery minnow. Because downstream effects are best described in terms of the cumulative effects of other water projects,

the effects analysis is presented in the cumulative effects section. It should be noted that the Buckman Project’s proposed diversion of San Juan-Chama waters would be offset by San Juan-Chama water releases such that there would be no net effect on flow downstream of the Buckman water diversion site. It would be the diversion and consumption of native waters made possible by implementation of the Buckman Project that has the potential to effect the silvery minnow.

**Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

There would be no direct or indirect construction or operation effects to the Rio Grande silvery minnow under any of the sediment facility alternatives.

**Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

There would be no direct or indirect construction or operation effects to the Rio Grande silvery minnow under any of the pipeline route alternatives.

**Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

**Table 14. Potential effects to Santa Fe County special status plants and animals that could occur within the project area due to the Proposed Action.**

Common Name (Scientific Name)	Project Effect	Construction and Operation Considerations
<b>PLANTS</b>		
Santa Fe cholla ( <i>Opuntia viridiflora</i> )	No effect, as this species was not found in the project construction boundaries.	None
Santa Fe milkvetch ( <i>Astragalus feensis</i> )	No effect, as this species was not found in the project construction boundaries.	None
<b>FISH</b>		
Flathead chub ( <i>Platygobio gracilis</i> )	Given the range of the flathead chub in the project area and its high frequency of capture, it is unlikely that the Proposed Action would have a measurable affect on the species overall population.	None
Rio Grande chub ( <i>Gila pandora</i> )	The Rio Grande chub has larvae that drift for a short period, thus a diversion structure could entrain drifting larvae of this species. Given the project design and potentially low densities of Rio Grande chub in the area, and the fact that it has not been collected during recent surveys, it is not likely that the proposed project would have a discernable impact on the population.	None

Common Name (Scientific Name)	Project Effect	Construction and Operation Considerations
Rio Grande silvery minnow ( <i>Hybognathus amarus</i> )	The species appears to be extirpated from the reach containing the diversion site. However, the diversion of approximately 1,350 ac-ft/yr of native Rio Grande water could have downstream effects to this species. (See the section, “Rio Grande Silvery Minnow”)	Construction: There would be no construction related effects to this species.  Operation: See the effects discussion previously and presented in the section, “Rio Grande Silvery Minnow.”

**REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS**

Desert kingsnake ( <i>Lampropeltis getula splendida</i> )	This species is likely to occur in the project area and would be difficult to detect in habitat potentially affected by construction. Should construction result in the mortality of an individual(s) the long-term effect on the species population would not be measurable.	None
Northern leopard frog ( <i>Rana pipiens</i> )	This species may utilize the immediate area of the water diversion site. No frogs were noted during the field survey. However, if present, approximately 40 feet of shoreline foraging and sunning habitat for this species would be temporarily lost during construction activities. Following construction, this species would likely reestablish itself in the area.	None

**BIRDS**

Bald eagle ( <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> )	Effects, if any, to this species would be limited to temporary dispersals during construction activities and/or avoidance of the Rio Grande where construction activities are taking place. No prime eagle roosting sites would be removed or otherwise affected by the proposed project. Construction activities at the Rio Grande may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, bald eagle individuals or populations.	Construction: If bald eagles are roosting in the immediate area prior to daily construction activities, construction would not commence until the eagles have left the area.  Operation: There are no operational effects.
Gray Vireo ( <i>Vireo vicinior</i> )	Much of the project area contains suitable nesting habitat for this species. Individuals of this species were not seen during project field surveys. However, gray vireo’s were seen in the general vicinity for another project.	Construction: Should it be necessary to remove or otherwise disturb potential nesting trees during the April 1 to August 15 nesting period, a survey, conducted by a qualified biologist, for gray vireo’s would be conducted.  Operations: There are no operational effects.

Common Name (Scientific Name)	Project Effect	Construction and Operation Considerations
Loggerhead shrike ( <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> )	The entire proposed project area contains suitable nesting habitat for this species. Individuals of this species were seen in the general vicinity of the proposed project route during the field survey. However, none were seen in the immediate ROW and no characteristically skewered prey items were found on the thorny vegetation or barbed wire fences of the proposed project area.	Construction: Should it be necessary to remove or otherwise disturb potential nesting trees during the April 1 to August 15 nesting period, a survey, conducted by a qualified biologist, for loggerhead shrikes would be conducted.  Operations: There are no operational effects
Mountain plover ( <i>Charadrius montanus</i> )	Mountain plovers were not detected during field surveys even though suitable habitat was present. It is not considered likely that this ground-nesting bird nests or forages in the vicinity. The Biotic Information System for New Mexico lists their occurrence in Santa Fe County as irregular and rare.	Construction: Should construction occur during the April through June nesting season, a pre-construction survey, performed by a qualified biologist, for mountain plovers would be conducted. If a nest site is discovered, construction would be delayed in the affected area until the chicks are fledged. Should foraging individuals be present, construction would be delayed until they vacate the area.  Operations: There are no operational effects.
Western burrowing owl ( <i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i> )	Burrowing owls were not detected during field surveys, though there were a few suitable burrows and other potential nesting sites encountered. Typical presence indicators such as molted feathers, pellets, eggshell fragments, prey remains, and excrement were likewise not encountered. Currently, it is not likely that burrowing owls utilize the immediate proposed project area. If present during construction, they would be expected to vacate the area, unless nesting. Burrowing owls, if present in the construction area, may abandon the area.	Construction: A preconstruction survey by a qualified biologist would be conducted. Should burrowing owls be present within the construction site, they would be allowed to move off on their own accord. Should they not do so, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish would be consulted regarding relocation strategy and practices. With relocation, effects to the population would be minor and short-term.  Operations: There are no operational effects.

Common Name (Scientific Name)	Project Effect	Construction and Operation Considerations
Zone-tailed hawk ( <i>Buteo albonotatus</i> )	While potentially present in the White Rock Canyon Area and documented in Bandelier National Monument, this species would not likely be affected by the proposed project.	Construction: There are no construction effects.  Operations: There are no operational effects.
<b>MAMMALS</b>		
Gunnison's prairie dog ( <i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i> )	The South Meadow Road prairie dog colony has been cleared out of the roadway ROW and proposed pipeline route by a previous, unrelated construction project. As of this writing, this colony had not re-established itself within the ROW.	Construction: The South Meadow Road prairie dog colony site would be surveyed by a qualified biologist prior to construction activities. If prairie dogs are found within the project corridor, then the requirements found in Chapter 14, Section 14-8.12 of the City of Santa Fe's Code regarding Gunnison's prairie dog relocation would be followed. Relocation of prairie dogs within the construction corridor would avoid adverse effects to this prairie dog population.  Operations: There are no operational effects.
Red fox ( <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> )	If present, the red fox would avoid the area during construction activities. Effects to this species would be minor and short-term.	None
Ringtail ( <i>Bassariscus astutus</i> )	This secretive species may utilize denning and foraging sites within the proposed project area. If present, the ringtail may temporarily avoid the proposed project area during construction activities. However, it is more likely that this nocturnal species would remain dormant in its shelter sites during daytime construction activities. Should construction result in the mortality of an individual, the effects to the local population would be minor and short-term.	None
Western spotted skunk ( <i>Spilogale gracilis</i> )	The proposed project area is likely outside the current distribution of this species. If present, affects to this species would likely be limited to temporary dispersals during construction activities.	None

### Cumulative Effects

An area of possible cumulative effect to the Rio Grande silvery minnow would be along the channel of the Rio Grande from Cochiti Dam to San Marcial, below Socorro. The cumulative effects of the Buckman Diversion have been analyzed, taking into account projects that are likely to affect the silvery minnow within the planning horizon for this project (2010). The effects



would be associated with the potential future transfer of rights for about 2,000 ac-ft/yr of water from below Cochiti Dam to the Buckman Diversion location.

The potential increase in native water diversions from the City of Albuquerque would be additive with the Buckman Diversion transfers as both projects would affect native Rio Grande water flow in minnow habitat. Other river operations, including those of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and Bureau of Reclamation river operations, contribute to this complex system of water flow into and out of the river. The effects of these other operations have been analyzed and are being regulated based on the outcome of separate consultation processes. A subsequent consultation process is underway which will be documented in a biological assessment that is being prepared for the Buckman Diversion Project. The analysis suggests that the transfer of water rights out of the Middle Rio Grande Basin to the Buckman Diversion area could cumulatively contribute to an adverse effect to the silvery minnow, but that the effect to flows would be so small as to be immeasurable.

Under most flow conditions, reductions in Rio Grande flows would be on the order of 1 percent. Of that 1 percent effect, about two-thirds would be associated with diversion of water imported to the Rio Grande from the inter-basin San Juan-Chama Project. The volume of water diverted at Buckman would fluctuate through the year based upon water demands, availability of other sources, and operational protocol. Table 15 illustrates the expected distribution of native water diversions throughout the year, both in terms of maximum expected diversions and average monthly diversions. The monthly diversion volume may vary from that shown in Table 15. Table 15 illustrates that the amount of native water that could be removed through the Buckman Direct Diversion is small when compared with river flow. The operations of the Buckman Direct Diversion could include diversion at the peak capacity, subject to the availability of water for diversion, and in conformance with any operational constraints to protect the silvery minnow, as determined by the current consultation with the FWS.

**Table 15. Amount of native water removed.**

	River Flow (Otwi Gage)	Total Diversion Flow		Native Water Diversion (33% Total = Native)		Native Water Percent of Flow	
		Max (cfs)	Ave. (cfs)	Max (cfs)	Ave (cfs)	Max	Ave.
Monthly Average (cfs)							
January	788	11.3	6.8	3.7	2.2	0.47%	0.28%
February	894	12.7	7.7	4.2	2.5	0.47%	0.28%
March	1,293	14.1	8.5	4.7	2.8	0.36%	0.22%
April	2,077	18.2	11.0	6.0	3.6	0.29%	0.17%
May	3,397	23.8	14.4	7.9	4.8	0.23%	0.14%
June	2,994	28.2	15.8	9.3	5.2	0.31%	0.17%
July	1,433	26.1	15.8	8.6	5.2	0.60%	0.36%
August	1,004	23.8	14.4	7.9	4.8	0.78%	0.47%
September	850	22.6	13.7	7.5	4.5	0.88%	0.53%
October	779	19.6	11.9	6.5	3.9	0.83%	0.50%
November	1,012	14.1	6.8	4.7	2.2	0.46%	0.22%
December	916	11.3	7.7	3.7	2.5	0.41%	0.28%

Although the amount of flow reduction would be small, during the late summer and early fall when Rio Grande native water flow is generally at its seasonal low and water demand is high, any reduction of native water flow could have a cumulative impact on the available habitat for the silvery minnow. During low flow periods, certain reaches of the river can dry up, creating pools where the minnow are more vulnerable to predation, disease, and rising water temperature. Longer duration lack of flow results in pool evaporation and mortality of the minnow trapped in them.

The water for the Buckman Diversion Project coupled with Albuquerque's proposed diversion could reduce native Rio Grande water flow in river reaches occupied by the minnow, thus increasing the duration and extent of river drying by a small amount. The flow analysis suggests that the effect from the Buckman Diversion would be so small that it would be nearly immeasurable. However, to minimize any possible effect, curtailment measures will be implemented by both the City of Albuquerque and the applicants for the Buckman Diversion.

As stated in the biological opinion and record of decision for the City of Albuquerque Drinking Water Project, the City of Albuquerque would begin to curtail diversion of its San Juan-Chama water from the Rio Grande when the native flows above the diversion point reach 135 cfs or less. As the flows continue to decline, operations in the Middle Rio Grande, including the City of Albuquerque, would reduce diversions until the river reaches 70 cfs of native water at the diversion point.

The Buckman Diversion structure would not be operable at full capacity (diversion of 28 cfs) at river flow rates of 200 cfs or below and would be inoperable during flows of 150 cfs or less. In addition, the applicants have proposed, through consultation with FWS, to not withdraw water associated with certain transferred rights when flows at Otowi are 325 cfs or less. These water rights involve about 1,500 ac-ft/yr of native water derived from future as yet to be defined water transfers. These Buckman project-specific measures coupled with development and implementation of regional conservation measures, including operation of the silvery minnow refugium, are designed to reduce cumulative adverse effects from the Buckman Diversion on the silvery minnow critical habitat to imperceptible levels.

In addition, another point to note is that only the consumptive portion of native rights would be transferred to the Buckman Diversion location. That fact means that there would be slightly more water in the river below the original point of diversion because the carriage water associated with the original use would no longer be lost from the river. Because the transfers of native water to the Buckman site are limited to quantities of water that have been historically diverted at or upstream of the San Acacia Diversion Dam and beneficially consumed, transfers of native water rights to the Buckman Diversion would not decrease flows downstream of San Acacia.

For the Buckman Diversion project, any specific mitigation measures for cumulative effects on the silvery minnow will be determined through an agency consultation process and will be documented in a biological assessment and a FS biological opinion.

## **Special Status Plants and Animals in the Project Area**

### **Affected Environment**

There are 7 plant and 51 wildlife special status species that are known to occur, or may occur, in Santa Fe County. However, after conducting further literature searches, field surveys, and habitat

assessments, this list was reduced to 2 plant species and 15 wildlife species that could potentially occur in the proposed project construction areas and ROW (see Table 13). The remaining species were determined not likely to occur in the project area based on the lack of suitable habitat and no record of their occurrence in the project area; or in the case of plant species, were not encountered during field surveys. One Federally listed threatened species, bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), is known to be a winter migrant in the area. Additionally, due to the potential diversion and use of native water, the Federally listed endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow (*Hybognathus amarus*) is addressed in the “Cumulative Effects” section. Also addressed in this section are FS Management Indicator Species that occur in the project area and considerations for those species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

**Management Indicator Species.** The Santa Fe National Forest Plan identifies seven species as Management Indicator Species. These species were selected to represent specific habitats and the species that use those habitats. These species are: Rio Grande cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki virginalis*), piñon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*), mourning dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), elk (*Cervus elaphus nelsoni*), and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis canadensis*). Within the proposed project area, habitat exists only for the piñon jay and mourning dove.

The piñon jay is primarily a species of dense piñon-juniper and pine woodlands; this species was identified adjacent to the project area. They could occupy hillside habitat within the proposed project area that have larger aggregations of trees. Piñon jays are highly colonial and depend heavily on the presence of piñon nuts, not only for food, but also as an environmental cue to initiate breeding. The Santa Fe National Forest contains over 450,000 acres of habitat. The piñon jay population is ranked as common for the Santa Fe National Forest (FS 2003). Surveys conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey between 1968 and 1998 indicate a stable or downward trend for piñon jay within the State of New Mexico. The trend for the Santa Fe National Forest is ranked as stable to downward based on the State trend and the breeding survey routes located near the Santa Fe National Forest (FS 2003). Piñon jays would use the pipeline area for foraging and hunting.

Mourning doves inhabit a variety of areas including scrublands, grasslands, open woodlands, and residential areas. Throughout the Santa Fe National Forest, mourning dove habit is considered stable to increasing and the population is ranked as common (FS 2003). Though not observed during site surveys, suitable nesting habitat for this species is found throughout the proposed project area.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 was implemented to protect the international export and import of avian species. The act protects nesting migratory birds from harassment, harvest, and harm. There are around 40 species protected under the act that may utilize habitat in the project area. Sixteen species are potentially year-round residents and 24 species may be in the area only during breeding season.

### Environmental Consequences

A project-specific search of the New Mexico Natural Heritage Program database did not reveal any records of currently listed special status species in the proposed project area. Sixteen special status species were identified that have potential occurrence or habitat within the construction areas. Three species (Flathead chub, Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), and Gunnison’s

prairie dog) were observed in close proximity to the project construction boundaries. One species, Rio Grande silvery minnow, while not occurring in the area, could experience an effect from the proposed diversion of native Rio Grande water and has been previously addressed. Project construction and operations are not expected to adversely affect any population of a special status species.

### **No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no disturbance of or change to special status species or their habitats.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

**Construction and Operations.** Table 14 addresses the effects to special status species.

The piñon jay and mourning dove, Management Indicator Species, are in the construction project area. Both species may experience temporary disruption and displacement from construction activities. Removal of piñon pines would represent a minor decrease in food supply for the piñon jay. However, many of the piñon pines that would be removed in the project area are dead or showing signs of die-off as a result of the bark beetle infestation. There would be permanent and minor decrease in potential habitat once all water diversion facilities are built and Buckman Road is improved. However, due to the good health of the piñon jay and mourning dove populations and available habitat, project effects would be very minor.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 provides for the protection of migratory birds from harassment, harm, or harvest. The primary concern to the integrity of avian communities associated with the proposed project area is the removal or disruption of nesting activities and nest destruction. The FWS Web site contains the following information: “As authorized by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the FWS issues permits to qualified applicants for the following types of activities: falconry, raptor propagation, scientific collecting, special purposes (rehabilitation, educational, migratory game bird propagation, and salvage), take of depredating birds, taxidermy, and waterfowl sale and disposal. Migratory bird permit policy is developed by the Division of Migratory Bird Management and the permits themselves are issued by the Regional Bird Permit Offices. The regulations governing migratory bird permits can be found in 50 CFR Part 13 (General Permit Procedures) and 50 CFR Part 21 (Migratory Bird Permits).” Implementation of the pre-construction bird survey by a qualified biologist and/or compliance with the following process would serve to avoid impacts to species covered under the Treaty or be compliant with the Treaty:

If the contractor is working (a) during the nonnesting season (between August and March) or (b) during the nesting season (which in this area of Santa Fe would include April through July) and a nest is found but is not being used; there is no requirement for a permit.

However, if the work is being done during the nesting season and a nest is found that is being used, the contractor has two options:

- Wait for nesting/fledging to be completed; or
- Apply to the FWS for a permit so take is authorized under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The FWS has a 30-day response period, but if it is an emergency, phone calls and faxing paperwork could complete the process within 48 hours.

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives***

**Construction and Operation.** Effects from the sediment facility alternatives are expected to be similar to the Proposed Action with the following exception: Alternative SF2 would result in additional improvements to Buckman Road including straightening and widening. Additional loss of habitat adjacent to Buckman Road would occur, and the area would probably experience more visitation and recreational use resulting in increased disturbance to special status species and their habitat.

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives***

**Construction and Operation.** The construction and operation effects are similar under the Proposed Action except that Alternative TWP1 would be constructed and operated in a new ROW corridor and, similarly, Alternative TWP2 would require a short run of new ROW corridor. Construction and operation of new pipeline corridors would result in the minor and short-term removal of vegetation and subsequent forage base reduction for some special status species. Development of new corridors could encourage changes to and increased recreation use in the area and subsequent degradation to vegetation and habitat of special status species.

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative***

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

In compliance with the Endangered Species Act, a biological assessment will be prepared and submitted to the FWS for their review, comment, and concurrence, if appropriate, of effect. Similarly, for FS sensitive species, a biological evaluation will be prepared and submitted for FS review, comment, and concurrence, if appropriate, of effect.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Habitat loss from implementation of the Proposed Action and alternatives could result in the permanent loss of approximately 59 acres. For special status species that utilize the affected area, this would be additive to the continuing habitat loss within lands contiguous with or in close proximity to the Buckman Project area in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and Los Alamos Counties, as well as San Ildefonso Pueblo lands. Habitat loss is primarily a result of new road construction (NM 284/85), housing development, and increasing recreation use of public lands. Cumulative effects to the Rio Grande silvery minnow are addressed in the previous section, “Rio Grande Silvery Minnow.”

### **Cultural Resources**

Cultural resources are those aspects of the physical environment that relate to human culture, society, and cultural institutions that hold communities together and link them to their surroundings. Cultural resources include expressions of human culture and history in the physical environment, such as prehistoric and historic sites, buildings, structures, objects, districts, natural features, and biota, which are considered important to a culture, subculture, or community. Cultural resources include aspects of the physical environment that are a part of traditional lifeways and practices, and are associated with community values and institutions.

**Cultural Resource Types.** Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archeological sites and ethnographic resources. Archeological sites are the tangible remains of past activities that

show use or modification by people. Archeological sites are distinct geographic areas that can include artifacts, features such as hearths, road remnants, or railroad grades, landscape alterations, or architecture. In general, archeological sites are the locations of purposeful human activity that have resulted in the deposit of cultural materials beyond the level of a few accidentally lost artifacts. Remains that do not meet this criterion are still archeological in nature, but are described as isolated occurrences. Prehistoric archeological sites refer to cultural resources used or modified by people before the establishment of a European presence in the upper Rio Grande Valley in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Historic archeological sites are those cultural resources used or modified since the arrival of Europeans in the region.

Cultural resources that have a direct association with a living culture may be considered ethnographic resources. These resources can include traditional cultural properties (TCPs), or Native American sacred sites and religious resources. TCPs are places or objects that are important to a particular living community, and this importance is “derived from the role the TCP plays in the community’s historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices” (Parker and King 1990). TCPs are associated with the cultural practices and beliefs that are based in a community’s history or important in maintaining the cultural identity of the community. TCPs are used within social, spiritual, political, and economic contexts and, thus, are essential to the preservation and viability of a culture. TCPs are not limited to a certain ethnic group; rather Americans of every ethnic origin have properties to which they ascribe traditional cultural value. In northern New Mexico, Hispanic culture and Native American groups in particular have maintained traditional communities, practices, beliefs, and subsistence patterns.

**Cultural Resources and the Law.** A number of Federal statutes address the identification of cultural resources and Federal responsibilities with regard to cultural resources. The long history of legal jurisdiction over cultural resources, dating back to 1906 with the passage of the Antiquities Act, demonstrates a continuing concern on the part of Americans for their cultural resources. Foremost among these statutes are the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended (16 U.S.C. Section 470), and its revised implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800). These statutes describe the process for identification and evaluation of cultural resources, assessment of effects of Federal actions on important resources, and consultation to avoid, reduce, or mitigate adverse effects. The NHPA does not require preservation of cultural resources, but does ensure that Federal agency decisions concerning the treatment of these resources result from meaningful consideration of cultural and historic values, and identification of options available to protect the resources.

**Tribal Consultation.** Various statutes require consultation with Native Americans to identify cultural resources important to tribes and to address tribal concerns about potential effects to these resources. These statutes include the NHPA, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Executive Order 13007, and Executive Order 13084. Federal guidelines direct agencies to consult with Native American tribal leaders and others knowledgeable about cultural resources important to them. Consultation addresses Federal actions with the potential to affect locations of traditional concern, religious practices, areas of traditional cultural uses, archeological sites, and other modern and/or ancestral tribal remains.

## Affected Environment

A cultural resource inventory was conducted of the proposed project area in the fall and winter 2002 (Wase et al. 2005). The information presented in this section is based on the findings of this inventory. The inventory included development of a cultural context for the region, research of previously conducted inventories near the project area, survey of the project area, and consultation with potentially interested Native American tribes. Prior to any ground-disturbing activity, the results of this inventory would be sent to the New Mexico SHPO for consultation, pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA and 36 CFR Part 800.

### Cultural History of the Region

**Prehistory.** Human occupation of the upper Rio Grande Valley is believed to date from about 12,000 years ago, during the Paleoindian Period (ca. 10,000 – 5500 B.C.). Most archaeologists believe that bands of mobile hunter-gatherers subsisted primarily on large game, but also collected wild plant foods. Paleoindian cultural remains are rare in the Santa Fe area. Other than isolated artifacts, only one site has been recorded. It is located south of the project area near Cañada Ancha.

During the Archaic Period (5500 B.C. – A.D. 600), hunter-gatherers practiced a more diversified subsistence strategy, targeting smaller game, expanding plant gathering activities in response to warmer and drier climatic conditions, and eventually growing maize. Sites can contain evidence of structures, processing pits, storage pits, tool production, and plant processing. Archeologists have identified Archaic sites near the project area, from valley floors to the foothills. Excavations near the project area have found some Archaic sites deeply buried with little or no surface evidence. Variable site use is apparent in the region, including limited activity sites, temporary base camps, longer duration occupations, and frequent reuse of desirable locations. These sites may indicate that the Late Archaic cultures were the first to occupy the area year-round.

Archeologists divide the Ceramic Period (A.D. 600 – 1600) into four periods. The Early Developmental Period (A.D. 600 – 900) is marked by the appearance of gray and black-on-white pottery. Sites tend to have one to three pithouses and a sparse scatter of artifacts and tend to be near permanent sources of water. These sites are rare in the upper Rio Grande Valley perhaps because the people here were able to maintain their Archaic way of life longer than populations on the Colorado Plateau to the west. Late Developmental Period (A.D. 900 – 1175) sites are more common, though surveys in the area have found few remains from this period. Sites become larger and pithouses give way to small clusters of surface rooms.

The Coalition Period (A.D. 1175 – 1325) was a time of change, with the number and size of sites increasing, and ceramic decoration changing from the use of mineral paint to carbon-based paint. Work in the area indicates the presence of small villages along rivers, supported by intensive, recurring use of the nearby hills for limited subsistence activities. Coalition Period sites are common in the area and generally contain evidence of surface architecture, thermal features for firing pottery, and extensive artifact concentrations of pottery and stone tool manufacturing debris.

The Classic Period (A.D. 1325 – 1600) saw continued change, especially with the construction of large villages with plazas. Black-on-white pottery is replaced by glaze-painted pottery. The Santa Fe area was heavily occupied during the early part of the Classic Period, but was mostly depopulated after A.D. 1420.

**History.** After initial explorations, the Spanish established a foothold in northern New Mexico in 1598 with a capital near Ohkay Owingeh. The local government parceled much of the area into grants, confirming Pueblo land use or opening lands to Spanish colonists. In 1742, Viceroy Mendoza established two grants near the project area, the Caja del Rio Grant and what became known as the Ramon Vigil Grant. These grants were located in upland areas, which were valuable for hunting, firewood gathering, and grazing livestock, especially sheep.

The Spanish colony became a part of Mexico in 1821, a territory of the United States in 1846, and one of the states in 1912. The descendants of the original grantee maintained the Caja del Rio Grant until it was sold in 1910 for back taxes. Ramon Vigil obtained his grant from the Sanchez family in 1851. With the coming of the railroad, land was becoming a commodity, and Vigil sold the grant to Winfield R. Smith and George Fletcher. Smith and Fletcher first leased the Vigil Grant to a cattleman whose 3,000-head herd devastated the grazing capacity of the land. In 1898, they leased the timber rights to Harry Buckman, a lumberman from Oregon.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, called the Chili Line and running between Santa Fe and Antonito, Colorado, was completed in 1887. The presence of the railroad stimulated the logging industry and brought about a mining boom to the area. Buckman built a bridge across the Rio Grande next to the Chili Line, built a siding on the east side of the river, and had a road blasted up the cliff west of the river to the top of Pajarito Plateau, establishing timber cutting for profit in the area. Success of the railroad siding and associated lumber camp encouraged the growth of the town of Buckman. A post office was established in the town in 1899. Shipping of lumber and livestock was the economic mainstay of Buckman through the 1920s, and in the early 1900s, the town became a gateway for tourists to Pajarito Plateau. In spite of these interests, changes in access to the plateau gradually caused the depopulation of the town, and by the 1940s, it faded from the landscape.

Buckman was the only residential site near the project area until the recent development of upscale residential areas. The project area contains a number of buried and overhead utilities, and is in a developed water well field. Transitory use of the area continues today, as residents of Santa Fe use the area for recreation. The area is part of grazing allotments of the BLM and FS, and is adjacent to special recreation areas.

### **Previous Work in the Area**

Extensive archeological research has been conducted near the project area. Within 1 mile of the project area, 52 cultural resource inventories and excavations have been conducted, resulting in the recording of 189 cultural resources. A detailed list of previous researchers and their findings can be found in the cultural resource inventory report prepared for this project (Wase et al. 2005). Seventy-five percent of these recorded resources are prehistoric and 25 percent are historic.

The current project area contains two major soil associations. The older Pojoaque series soils are old alluvium on stable slopes and alluvial fans. When exposed, Pojoaque soils exhibit old prehistoric surfaces. The Bluewing series soils are found in valleys and are derived from recent alluvium of mixed origin. Previous work, together with the current inventory, supports that when Pojoaque soils are exposed at the surface, they are likely to contain prehistoric cultural remains. Surfaces with the Bluewing soils are more recent and are more likely to contain historic cultural materials. However, Bluewing soils can likely cover older surfaces that may contain prehistoric cultural deposits. Thus, there is a possibility that subsurface cultural remains exist below surfaces with Bluewing series soils in the project area.



### Cultural Resources Identified in the Project Area

A cultural resource inventory was conducted of the project area, with two exceptions explained below. The inventory included an archeological field survey that covered the project area for the Proposed Action and the alternatives. The field survey also included buffer zones to allow for realignments of proposed developments to avoid important cultural resources, and to include room for construction activities. The field survey identified 16 archeological sites and 138 isolated occurrences in the project area and buffer zones. The inventory fully recorded and evaluated all of these resources to determine if they are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Resources that are eligible or resources where the eligibility remains undetermined are afforded consideration under the NHPA. If a Federal action will affect an eligible resource, then measures must be taken to avoid, reduce, or mitigate the affect. None of the isolated occurrences are eligible for the NRHP. Of the 16 sites, 9 sites are eligible for listing on the NRHP. These 9 sites are presented in Table 16.

**Table 16. Eligible archeological sites identified during field survey of the project area and buffer zones.**

Site Number	Description	Age
LA 15222	Buckman townsite Artifact scatter	Historic Prehistoric
LA 98690	Artifact scatter and hearths	Prehistoric
LA 117262	Artifact scatter	Historic
LA 128580	Denver & Rio Grande railroad grade (the Chili Line)	Historic
LA 137068	Artifact scatter and feature	Prehistoric
LA 137070	Artifact scatter	Prehistoric
LA 137072	Artifact scatter	Unknown
LA 137075	Artifact scatter	Unknown
LA 138574	Artifact scatter Artifact scatter and feature	Prehistoric Historic

Note: LA = Laboratory of Anthropology. (Source: Wase et al. 2005)

Two portions of the project area were not inventoried for cultural resources. These are the half-mile of above ground power line near the MRC WTP for the Proposed Action, and the substation and 1 mile above ground power line for Alternative AGP1. These project areas have undergone cultural resource inventory, with no additional sites found. The results will be included with the other evaluation materials to the State Historic Preservation Officer prior to any construction activities taking place at these locations.

Another phase of the cultural resource inventory was consultation with potentially interested tribes. The FS sent consultation letters to the following tribes on August 5, 2002: Pueblo of Jemez, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Laguna, Pueblo of Acoma, Ohkay Owingeh, Pueblo of San Ildefonso, Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Pueblo of Isleta, Pueblo of Taos, Pueblo of Picuris, Pueblo of Sandia, Pueblo of Tesuque, Pueblo of Nambe, Pueblo of Zia, Pueblo of Pojoaque, and the

Jicarilla Apache Nation. As of this printing, none of the tribes has expressed concerns for traditionally important cultural resources in the project area. Consultation efforts will continue with the tribes throughout preparation of the EIS.

## **Environmental Consequences**

### **No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction of the Buckman Project would be undertaken. There would be no effects to cultural resources as a result of this alternative.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

Effects to cultural resources could arise from direct or indirect sources. Potential direct effects can include physical destruction resulting from groundbreaking activities; access to construction areas by large machinery; improvement of existing access and storm water control measures; use of staging areas for storage of equipment and supplies; and future maintenance activities. These physical effects can occur to both known sites and subsurface sites that could be discovered during groundbreaking activities. Another potential direct effect can be the introduction of visual or auditory elements out of character with a resource or disruption of the setting of a resource. These can result from introducing modern buildings and machinery into an otherwise rural or natural setting. Potential indirect effects can include physical harm resulting from changes in erosion patterns that are caused by construction, soil compaction, vegetation removal; increased vandalism or illegal artifact collecting of resources due to the presence of construction and maintenance workers in the area; and an increased probability for inadvertent physical harm to resources both in the short and long term.

**Construction Effects.** Effects to cultural resources would be mitigated through implementation of the following practices. Archeological sites would be avoided where possible. Fencing would be erected around sites near the construction area, but not subject to direct effect, to protect them from inadvertent intrusion by construction equipment and personnel. Additionally, a qualified archeological monitor would be present during all construction excavation and surface modifications. If previously unknown subsurface cultural deposits are discovered, construction activities in the area would halt and the agency would determine appropriate treatment in consultation with the SHPO. Archeological sites that could not be avoided during construction would have archeological testing or data recovery efforts conducted prior to construction. Subsurface sites discovered during construction activities would also undergo testing or data recovery treatment. Archeological data recovery would be conducted in compliance with a formal data recovery plan approved by the involved agencies and SHPO. Standard erosion control measures would be in effect during construction activities. All workers conducting construction activities would be educated regarding cultural resources in the project area, appropriate avoidance measures, and associated restrictions per Federal statutes.

Under the Proposed Action, four sites would definitely be directly affected by construction activities: LA 15222 (the townsite of Buckman), LA 138574, LA 98690, and LA 128580 (the Denver and Rio Grande railroad grade). The townsite would be physically affected by the sediment facility, Booster Station 1A, road improvements, underground power line, and various pipelines coming to and going from these facilities. LA 138574 and LA 98690 would be physically affected by the treated water pipeline. The railroad grade would be crossed by pipelines eight times under the Proposed Action. Three sites are located very close to the

pipelines and underground power line, and though it seems that they could be avoided on the surface, it is probable that the subsurface deposits of these sites would be affected during construction. These sites include LA 117262, LA 137068, and LA 137075 (pipeline only). Archeological testing would be conducted prior to construction to determine if deposits from these three sites extend into the pipeline corridor. Two sites near the pipelines and underground power line, LA 137070 and LA 137072, would be easily avoided during construction. Impacts from construction of the one-half mile above ground power line are unknown at this time because a cultural resource inventory has not yet been done at this location. However, because the power line would be above ground, it is likely that direct physical impacts to resources in this portion of the project area would be avoided by placing the structures away from any identified resources.

Indirect effects to cultural resources are difficult to quantify and could occur to cultural resources both in and outside the project area. Construction of facilities and associated compaction of soils and removal of vegetation would change the erosion patterns, which in turn could physically harm resources. The increase in activities and workers in the area during construction could result in an increase in vandalism or illegal artifact collecting at archeological sites. Improvements in access to the area could also result in increased vandalism and artifact collecting from members of the public. The increase in construction activities and improvements in public access would also increase the chance for inadvertent physical harm to cultural resources.

**Operation Effects.** Under the Proposed Action, cultural resource mitigations would include designing the project facilities near Buckman to complement the historic use of the area when viewed from White Rock Overlook Park. In addition, interpretive signage that explains the history of the Buckman area, through text and pictures, would be offered to Los Alamos County for placement at the White Rock Overlook Park viewing platform. These mitigations would be in addition to a data recovery effort at the Buckman townsite. All workers conducting maintenance activities would be educated regarding cultural resources in the project area, appropriate avoidance measures, and associated restrictions per Federal statutes.

Direct effects from operation and maintenance of the diversion facilities would be unlikely since most activities would take place within areas already disturbed by construction activities. The introduction of modern buildings and machinery would affect the visual setting of the townsite of Buckman; however, the facilities would be designed to complement the historic use of the area, thereby reducing the effect. With this mitigation measure in place, the facilities would not change the NRHP eligibility of the site. Indirect effects on cultural resources both in and outside the project area could include an increase in vandalism or illegal artifact collecting due to the presence of maintenance workers in the area. Maintenance activities would also increase the chances for inadvertent physical harm to cultural resources.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

The following discussion compares the effects of two alternatives with those of the Proposed Action.

**Construction Effects.** Alternative SF1 would place the sediment facility and Booster Station 1A in a location off of the Buckman townsite. There are no known cultural resources in this new location. This would remove much of the effects of the Proposed Action on the NRHP-eligible Buckman townsite. The townsite would still be affected by the pipelines going to and coming from the sediment facility and booster station. However, pipeline trenches are narrow and excavation of them would effect the townsite much less than construction of the sediment facility

and Booster Station 1A. Also, the return flow pipeline would affect the railroad grade under this alternative, whereas under the Proposed Action, this pipeline could avoid the grade.

Alternative SF2 would place the sediment facility and Booster Station 1A in a location off of the Buckman townsite and would not use a return flow pipeline, resulting in even fewer effects to the townsite of Buckman and the railroad grade. However, because this alternative would use trucks to haul the sediment offsite, the road would require more improvements, including widening and straightening, thereby expanding the area affected by road construction activities and increasing the possibility to impact buried archeological sites.

Indirect effects from construction of either of the two alternatives would be similar to those arising from the Proposed Action.

**Operation Effects.** Alternative SF1 and SF2 would have less of a visual effect on the historical character of the Buckman townsite because the sediment facility and booster station would not be located within the townsite. SF2 would have more of a periodic visual and audible effect on the historical character of the Buckman townsite because of the noise and dust from trucks hauling sand from the sediment facility on a regular basis. Indirect effects of operation under any of the two alternatives would be similar to those arising from the Proposed Action.

#### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

**Construction Effects.** Alternative RWP1 would use one pipeline instead of two for the raw water conveyance between Booster Station 1A and Booster Station 2A. The pipeline route would be the same as under the Proposed Action, and thus, like the Proposed Action, it would impact the Buckman townsite and railroad grade. However, by using just one pipeline instead of two, a single trench instead of two would be excavated, thereby reducing the extent of the effects. Alternative TWP1 would physically affect site LA 138574. Alternative TWP2 would not directly affect any cultural resources. Alternative TWP3 would cross the railroad grade in four places. This is compared to the TWP under the Proposed Action, which would physically affect sites LA 138574 and LA98690. Indirect effects caused by construction of any of the alternatives would be similar to those resulting from the Proposed Action.

**Operation Effects.** There would be no direct effects to cultural resources under any of the alternatives since maintenance activities would take place within the areas already disturbed by construction activities. Indirect effects of operation under the alternatives would be similar to those arising from the Proposed Action.

#### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction Effects.** Alternative AGP1b would use an above ground power line between the existing Buckman substation and the river, instead of an underground power line. It is likely that all identified cultural resources, with the exception of the Buckman townsite, would be avoided during construction of the power line. While the areal extent of the Buckman townsite would require placement of at least one power line structure within its boundaries, the extent of physical disturbance to the townsite would be greatly reduced in comparison to the Proposed Action's underground power line. Because the power line would be above ground, it is likely that direct physical impacts to resources in this portion of the alternative's project area would be avoided by placing the structures away from any identified resources. Indirect effects caused by construction

of Alternative AGP1 would be similar to those resulting from the Proposed Action. AGP1a would not impact cultural resources.

**Operation Effects.** There would be no direct physical effects to cultural resources under Alternative AGP1 because maintenance activities would take place within the areas already disturbed by construction activities. The introduction of an above ground power line near the river would result in greater impacts to the visual setting of the townsite of Buckman as compared to the Proposed Action's underground power line. Indirect effects of operation under the alternative would be similar to those arising from the Proposed Action.

### **Cumulative Effects**

The project area has undergone development in the past, in the form of overhead and underground utilities, water development, and roads. A railroad, road, power lines and pipelines have all been constructed through the Buckman corridor. The area has also been used in the past for grazing and off-road vehicle use, and is currently accessed by the public for recreation. All of these activities have likely resulted in some level of adverse effect to the cultural resources in the project area; however, due to the surficial nature of some of the activities, and the small amount of acreage of those activities that involved ground disturbance, the effects overall have been minimal. The region surrounding the southern portion of the project area has undergone development in the recent past, and this trend for constructing housing developments would likely continue in the region in the future. Effects to cultural resources from these housing developments are much more extensive and intensive than the likely effects assessed for this proposed water development project. The effects to cultural resources caused by the Proposed Action or the alternatives would be additive, but minimal.

## **Recreation Resources and Traffic**

### **Affected Environment**

The recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) is a system used by the FS and BLM to stratify and define classes of outdoor recreation opportunity environments or settings provided on agency regulated lands. Recreation opportunities, according to this system, can be expressed in terms of three principal components: activity, setting, and experience. Possible mixes of activities, settings, and recreation experience have been arranged along a spectrum, ranging from primitive to urban (BLM 1988). There are six major ROS setting categories within the ROS system. The ROS setting categories arranged in order from urban to primitive are as follows: Urban, Rural, Roaded Natural (RN), Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM), Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM), and Primitive. The setting categories are constructed to display the range from very developed and convenient (Urban) to very remote and wild (Primitive).

The ROS provides seven descriptors to differentiate among the various setting categories. These descriptors give agencies evaluation tools for monitoring the success of management efforts. In addition, agency personnel can use these descriptors to guide decisions on site development proposals. Furthermore, public lands visitors can use the descriptors to evaluate whether a particular destination on Federal land offers the setting that matches their expectations. Descriptions of conditions are evaluated by whether they are fully compatible with an ROS expectation. The range of evaluation levels continues through levels termed "compatible," "norm," "inconsistent," and "unacceptable." Thus four levels are available to describe how well a given setting fits with the national standards set by the ROS. For instance, "norm" defines the

typical conditions when a given setting is managed according to national standards. The term “inconsistent” highlights some incompatibility between ground conditions and standards. Some situations are left inconsistent with national standards because they meet local management objectives. When conditions fall into the “unacceptable” level, significant management changes are necessary to bring the setting into its desired state. If those changes are not possible (such as is the case along the Buckman utility corridor managed as a Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized setting), the agency may consider changing the allocation to fit actual ground conditions.

The descriptors are as follows:

1. Access: The access descriptor depicts the type and mode of travel compatible within each setting category.
2. Remoteness: The remoteness descriptor defines the perception of being removed from the sights and sounds of human activities.
3. Naturalness: The naturalness descriptor illustrates the physical conditions of the setting as compared to a natural environment. This descriptor is primarily a visual evaluation of the surrounding landscape and describes the level of human modifications that has occurred or is proposed.
4. Social Encounters: The social encounters descriptor attempts to define the appropriate frequency of meeting others during the course of a day’s activities within an area with a particular setting category.
5. Visitor Impacts: The visitor impacts descriptor describes the physical change that human use produces in the environment. This descriptor focuses on how much change will be allowed and what tools for control are appropriate, rather than how impacts can be prevented.
6. Visitor Management: The visitor management descriptor focuses on the amount of regulation and control, plus the level of information and services, provided to visitors. More developed settings offer sufficient regulation and services to provide a necessary level of security for visitors; whereas, a primitive setting lacks such management, demanding independence and a level of risk taking.
7. Facilities and Site Management: The facilities and site management descriptor refers to the level of site development, in that urban and rural settings provide more convenience and comfort with more developed facilities than primitive settings where facilities are absent.

The area of potential effect for recreation resources includes contiguous river segments and reservoirs from Heron Reservoir in northern New Mexico to Cochiti Reservoir in central New Mexico, as well as the Buckman Road/Dead Dog Leg corridors and adjacent lands. Recreational use across these lands varies, based on location, activity, access, and water source. Therefore, an overview of relevant corridors, river reaches, and reservoirs with their associated recreational uses are presented below.

### **Corridors**

Originating at Otowi Bridge and continuing through the project area near the terminus of Buckman Road is a primitive, unmaintained pack trail. The pack trail crosses FS land under Management Area G (managed for a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) setting of Roaded Natural and Semi-Primitive Motorized (FS 1987)) directly adjacent to, and within, the project

area. It then continues south on FS Management Area L land that is managed for a ROS setting of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) (FS 1987). This trail system is typically used by cyclists, campers, picnickers, birders, rockhounds, horseback riders, hikers, and off-highway-vehicle (OHV) users. OHV use on FS lands under Management Area G is legal; however, on Management Area L land adjacent to Area G in the project area, it is illegal.

Management Area G in the project area includes objectives for both Semi-Primitive Motorized and Roaded Natural. In the Buckman area along the road and to the river, well buildings and other facilities are consistent with Roaded Natural, while other descriptors are consistent with Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). A full list of descriptors is provided in Table 17.

The current management objectives with ROS for BLM lands along Buckman Road are Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, meaning OHV use is limited to existing roads and trails (BLM 1988). The southern portion of BLM managed lands, about a mile south of Alamo Creek, is assigned Rural, where frequent social interactions and more cultural modifications to the environment are acceptable (BLM 1988). Within the project area, the RMP designates existing roads (such as Buckman Road) as open to vehicle use; however, the emphasis for SPNM is to provide opportunities for challenge and solitude.

For BLM lands, the actual existing recreation setting along Buckman Road and south of Alamo Creek is better described in Table 17 by each descriptor. As illustrated, all descriptors are not completely consistent with management objectives for SPNM. Some exceed the standard, and others fall short of standards. BLM direction allows for variance from these standards when local objectives are taken into account. The criteria used to make these evaluations are taken from the 1990 ROS Primer and Field Guide and Appendix C of the 2001 “Built Environment Image Guide” (FS-710).

The Taos RMP provides overall management objectives for recreation in this area. During the revision process for the RMP, scheduled to begin in 2006, the ROS setting categories for this Buckman area will be re-evaluated and adjusted where necessary to reflect existing and future potential conditions.

Buckman Road is a narrow, unpaved, County maintained rural road primarily intended for low volume vehicle use. The unpaved segment of the road is approximately 9.2 miles long. Buckman Road serves as the only access to the Rio Grande in the Española Ranger District. In order to quantify current recreational use along Buckman Road, a mechanical vehicle counter was buried under the road surface just north of Dead Dog Well for approximately 1 month, and two separate daylong traffic surveys were conducted near the counter. The data indicates that approximately 19 vehicles per weekday visit Buckman, of which nearly 50 percent do so for recreational purposes. Approximately 50 vehicles per weekend day visit Buckman, of which approximately 95 percent do so for recreational reasons. This data does not necessarily represent yearlong use patterns.

Along Buckman Road and the Dead Dog Leg maintenance road, recreation opportunities include picnicking, camping, hiking, biking, OHV use, caving, rock climbing, fishing, target shooting and hunting (illegal on FS land directly adjacent to the project area except T17N, R8E, Section 9; legal on BLM land provided that all State and Federal laws and regulations are followed), wildlife viewing, piñon nut and firewood gathering, recreational driving, photography, and partying. Recreation along the Dead Dog Leg corridor is far more limited relative to Buckman Road. There

are no developed recreation resources or opportunities along the Buckman or Dead Dog Leg corridors.

**Table 17. ROS existing conditions.**

	<b>ROS Descriptor</b>	<b>Along Buckman Road</b>	<b>About 1 mile South of Alamo Creek</b>
BLM Managed Lands	Access	Improved, double-lane road: Roaded Natural	Two-track: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Remoteness	Too close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roaded Natural	Too close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roaded Natural
	Naturalness	Vegetative manipulation not apparent: Semi-Primitive Motorized	Vegetative manipulation not apparent: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Social Encounters	Low to Moderate: Semi-Primitive Motorized	Low: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Visitor Impacts	Subtle compaction and vegetation loss from visitors at all sites: Roaded Natural	Limited site hardening: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Visitor Management	Only fencing and signing of ownership: Semi-Primitive Motorized	No controls: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Facilities & Site Management	Many utilities, power lines, water tanks, pumps, substations: Urban	Visible power lines: Semi-Primitive Motorized
		<b>Along Buckman Road</b>	<b>River Access</b>
Forest Service Managed Lands	Access	Improved, double-lane road: Roaded Natural	Two-track: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Remoteness	Close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roaded Natural	Close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roaded Natural
	Naturalness	Vegetative manipulation not apparent: Semi-Primitive Motorized	Vegetative manipulation not apparent: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Social Encounters	Moderate: Roaded Natural	Moderate: Roaded Natural
	Visitor Impacts	Subtle compaction and vegetation loss from visitors at all sites: Roaded Natural	Subtle compaction and vegetation loss from visitors at all sites: Roaded Natural
	Visitor Management	Only fencing and signing of ownership: Semi-Primitive Motorized	Only fencing and signing of ownership: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Facilities & Site Management	Some utilities, power lines, well buildings: Roaded Natural	Some utilities, powerlines, well buildings: Roaded Natural

All existing infrastructure located along Buckman Road and the Dead Dog Leg maintenance road is well within the range of firearms and shows signs of vandalism. On May 24, 2001, Closure Order No. 10-251 was signed by the FS prohibiting the discharge of a firearm, air rifle, gas gun (paintball gun), shooting bow and arrow, or anything that can harm others or their property within 1 mile of the forest boundary on all sections comprising the eastern boundary of the Española



Ranger District Caja Subunit except in T17N, R8E, Section 9, which is directly adjacent to the Dead Dog Leg corridor (FS 2001a).

The staging area for Caja Del Rio “Diablo” Canyon consists of an unimproved, unmaintained dirt parking lot that is accessed from Buckman Road. The Diablo Canyon staging area provides parking and access to the canyon and Cañada Ancha for rock climbers, horseback riders, hikers, runners, rock hounds, wildlife viewers, firearms users, spelunkers (cavers), partiers, and a host of other pursuits.

### **River Reaches**

Three river reaches are included in the area of potential effect from the Buckman Project.

The Rio Chama below Heron Reservoir to Abiquiu Reservoir is at the northernmost extent of the area of potential effect and is primarily a brown trout/rainbow trout fishery. A 5.5-mile scenic trail along the Rio Chama connects El Vado Reservoir with Heron Reservoir. Commercial and private boating operations have been regulated for safety and congestion reasons on this reach of the Rio Chama, to maintain wilderness quality. Both the BLM and FS cooperatively manage this segment of the Rio Chama. BLM handles the river permit system while the FS manages the land. Depending on the time of year and the schedule of dam releases upstream, San Juan-Chama Project waters, along with MRGCD water for irrigation demands, can make up a sizeable percentage of this recreationally utilized flow.

The Rio Chama below Abiquiu Reservoir to the confluence with the Rio Grande is also north of the project area and is in the middle reach in the area of potential effect. This river segment primarily supports a naturally reproducing brown trout fishery. The first 7 miles below Abiquiu Dam are designated by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish as “special trout water.” This fishery is prevented from developing due to the unreliability of the outflow from Abiquiu Reservoir, as well as water quality issues. Limited boating on this lower reach of the Rio Chama also occurs, although no commercial outfitters guide this stretch.

The ROS category for these two reaches of the river range from Primitive in the wilderness to SPNM, SPM, or Rural (along highways). The project will affect streamflows in these reaches to a small degree, but effects to descriptors are not expected; therefore, ROS for these reaches will not be discussed further.

The Rio Grande from the Rio Grande/Rio Chama confluence to Cochiti Lake is the southernmost reach potentially affected by the project. This reach is approximately 15 miles long and is primarily a brown trout, smallmouth bass, and channel catfish fishery. Commercial and private boating operations occur on the lower, canyon-bound reach of this segment of the Rio Grande in White Rock Canyon. Special use permits must be obtained from the FS in order to commercially guide tours through White Rock Canyon. The put-in for White Rock Canyon is at the terminus of Buckman Road. ROS at the terminus of Buckman Road (at the river) is consistent with Roaded Natural because of the existing facilities (wells and utility lines).

### **Reservoirs**

Four reservoirs are included in the area of potential effect from the Buckman Project. Heron Reservoir is at the northernmost extent of the area of potential effect. El Vado and Abiquiu Reservoirs are in the middle reaches, and Cochiti Reservoir is at the southern extent of areas potentially affected by the project. Each reservoir has facilities that support a wide array of

waterborne recreation activities including boating, swimming, and fishing. None of the actions have potential to affect the ROS setting for these reservoirs because only a small variation in reservoir levels would occur, which would have negligible potential to change the ROS descriptors.

## **Environmental Consequences**

### **No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities and resources at the reservoirs, river reaches, and immediate project area would not be affected. Actions related to diversion of San Juan-Chama water would not occur. Flow characteristics in the Rio Grande related to the release of San Juan-Chama contract water for use by the City and County of Santa Fe would continue to be affected by the rate of Buckman well pumping and related releases of offsetting San Juan-Chama Project water (currently approximately 2,500-3,000 ac-ft/yr). Project-related improvements to Buckman Road would not take place. Therefore, no direct or indirect short- or long-term effects to recreation opportunities or resources would occur from the implementation of the No Action Alternative.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

**Construction Effects.** During construction operations, road improvements may delay access along part or all of Buckman Road and/or the Dead Dog Leg maintenance road. Burial of raw water pipe lines, gas lines, and power transmission lines under or near Buckman Road would result in a short-term direct negative effect to recreational access for the duration of construction. Examples of these short-term effects would be increased noise levels and delayed access to the river. Therefore, construction activities along the Buckman and Dead Dog Leg corridors associated with the Proposed Action would include access and safety controls, where practical for users.

Buckman Road would not be closed during construction related to the Proposed Action. Therefore, the public would have to share the road with construction traffic and may experience traffic delays during the 12-month Buckman Road construction schedule. The mitigations that would be implemented to notify the public of the potential to encounter construction traffic include use of construction road signs and flagmen, which would serve to protect the area user during construction. Additionally, due to safety considerations, public access to the Rio Grande at the construction site may be limited during the 5-month water diversion construction.

**Operation Effects.** Following construction, the improved Buckman Road would allow low clearance vehicles to negotiate the road more conveniently and could indirectly increase the usage levels of the Buckman and Dead Dog Leg corridors and surrounding land. While speculative, increased access could result in a greater incidence of vandalism, target shooting (both legal and illegal), illegal OHV use, as well as other undesirable activities resulting in harassment of law-abiding visitors. The County would undertake maintenance of Buckman Road; therefore, maintenance vehicles and/or grader traffic would increase slightly based on necessary maintenance and repair schedules.

The criteria used to make these evaluations are taken from the 1990 ROS Primer and Field Guide and Appendix C of the 2001 “Built Environment Image Guide” (FS 1990 and USDA 2001).

Improvements to Buckman Road as part of the Proposed Action would affect to a small degree the recreation experience on both BLM and FS lands. The effects can partly be described in terms of the changes to the ROS setting. However, because the BLM land classification of SPNM is not consistent with current conditions, additional description is required. These FS and BLM lands are along the Buckman and Dead Dog Leg corridors.

On the SPNM BLM lands along Buckman Road, the Access and Naturalness ROS descriptors would be affected due to the use of aggregate, vegetative manipulation, and curve straightening. Cumulative affects to social encounters, visitor impacts, and visitor management could result as well. Social encounters could increase as a result of road improvements, which could increase loss of vegetation and site hardening to compensate for increased visitation. Another possible outcome would be that management controls could be applied to offset visitor impacts. Improvements to the road would move the condition further from the existing management objectives of SPNM.

On BLM lands south of Alamo Creek, the WTP, power line, and substation would change the existing condition to all but two of the ROS descriptors. This would be consistent with BLM objectives except for the access descriptor.

**Table 18. Effects to ROS conditions from Proposed Action and alternatives.**

	<b>ROS Descriptor</b>	<b>Along Buckman Road</b>	<b>~1 mile South of Alamo Creek</b>
BLM Managed Lands	Access	Improved, double-lane road with aggregate: Rural	Improved road, aggregate and paved: Rural/Urban
	Remoteness	Too close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roded Natural	Too close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roded Natural
	Naturalness	Highly modified by vegetative manipulation and curve straightening, especially near Diablo Canyon: Rural	Vegetative manipulation dominant in foreground: Roded Natural/Rural
	Social Encounters	Low to moderate but may increase due to road improvements: Roded Natural	Moderate to high due to personnel and maintenance: Roded Natural
	Visitor Impacts	Subtle compaction and vegetation loss from visitors at all sites – could increase due to possible increased visitation: Roded Natural	Subtle hardening dominant: Roded Natural
	Visitor Management	Only fencing and signing of ownership – may increase to offset visitor impacts: Semi-Primitive Motorized/Roded Natural	No controls: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Facilities & Site Management	Many utilities, power lines, water tanks, pumps, substations: Urban	Obvious and numerous facilities: Rural/Urban
		<b>Along Buckman Road</b>	<b>River Access</b>
	Access	Improved, double-lane road with aggregate: Roded Natural	Two-track: Semi-Primitive Motorized
	Remoteness	Close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roded Natural	Close to improved roads and higher density travel and visitation: Roded Natural

Forest Service Managed Lands	Naturalness	Vegetation manipulation dominant in the foreground: Roded Natural	Vegetative manipulation dominant in foreground near river: Roded Natural
	Social Encounters	Moderate but may increase due to road improvements: Roded Natural	Moderate but may increase due to road improvements: Semi-Primitive Motorized/Roded Natural
	Visitor Impacts	Subtle compaction and vegetation loss from visitors at all sites – could increase due to possible increased visitation: Roded Natural	Subtle compaction and vegetation loss from visitors at all sites – could increase due to possible increased visitation: Roded Natural
	Visitor Management	Only fencing and signing of ownership – may increase to offset visitor impacts: Semi-Primitive Motorized/Roded Natural	Only fencing and signing of ownership – may increase to offset visitor impacts: Semi-Primitive Motorized/Roded Natural
	Facilities & Site Management	Power lines, well buildings, sediment facility and booster station visible but designed to blend, not dominate: Roded Natural	Well buildings plus diversion structure and power lines visible, but designed to blend in, not dominate: Roded Natural.

On National Forest System lands along Buckman Road, the Access and Naturalness ROS descriptors would be affected due to the use of aggregate and vegetative manipulation. As with the BLM lands, cumulative affects to social encounters, visitor impacts, and visitor management could result as well. Social encounters could increase as a result of road improvements, which could increase loss of vegetation and require site hardening to compensate from increased visitation. Another possible outcome would be that management controls could be applied to offset visitor impacts. Improvements to the road and the river diversion would remain within Roded Natural objectives.

The negative effects would be partially mitigated by the use of colored additives in the concrete at all dip sections to minimize the visual contrast with the existing landscape (Figure 15). For example, signs marking speed limit and curves would require construction in a manner compatible with a Roded Natural setting by constructing both sign and support post from solid wood (or appearing so—avoid metal, fiberglass or other synthetics) and have a natural or stained finish. Also, apparent disturbance to vegetation (slash piles, etc.) would be restored within between 1 to 2 years unless left as wildlife habitat piles.

Under the Proposed Action, the Rio Chama below Heron Reservoir to Abiquiu Reservoir and the Rio Chama below Abiquiu Reservoir to the confluence with the Rio Grande would each experience slight discharge fluctuations from project related releases. The additional release of approximately 28 cfs during peak demand releases would have minor effects to the hydraulic characteristics of the Rio Chama. Recreation resources would not be noticeably affected. Therefore, developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities (boating, swimming, camping, hiking, etc.) and resources along these segments of the Rio Chama would not experience direct or indirect short- or long-term negative effects.

Effects to the segment of the Rio Grande above the project area are expected to be the same as for those discussed above for the Rio Chama segments.

At the diversion site, boaters would be required to navigate away from the diversion structure where it extends into the Rio Grande. However, at this location the river is 50 to 60 feet across, and the diversion structure would only extend into the river approximately 15 feet. Thus, boaters should be able to readily avoid the structure.

The segment of the Rio Grande below the project area would not benefit from the addition of project-related San Juan-Chama water discharge. However, the reduced discharge would not be discernible. This is because the San Juan-Chama discharges for the Albuquerque diversion would also be occurring and the Buckman amount is relatively small compared to the Albuquerque amount. In addition, nonwater-based recreation users are not directly dependent on streamflows. Therefore, no direct or indirect short- or long-term negative effects to recreation opportunities or resources would result on the Rio Grande and surrounding land below the project area.

Under the Proposed Action, reservoirs would all experience a slight fluctuation in storage from project-related discharges. Water levels at these reservoirs plays an important role in the recreation opportunities available, and a change in water levels could affect recreation opportunities. However, project-related discharges (approximately 28 cfs at peak demand) would result in a 1-inch fluctuation at the reservoirs and would not be large enough to negatively affect the volume of water stored at the reservoirs. Therefore, no direct or indirect short- or long-term negative effects to developed or undeveloped recreation opportunities or resources at Heron, El Vado, or Abiquiu Reservoirs or Cochiti Lake would occur.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

**Construction Effects.** Specific construction effects to recreation resources and opportunities under Alternative SF1 and SF2 are expected to be the same as for the Proposed Action.

**Operation Effects.** Operation effects to recreation resources and opportunities due to Alternative SF1 are expected to be the same as for the Proposed Action. Under Alternative SF2, where the coarse river sediment would be trucked out and disposed of at an offsite facility, Buckman Road users could encounter heavy truck traffic. During periods when sand is hauled out of the facilities, the recreation experience and SPNM, SPM/Roaded Natural setting sought by visitors to the Buckman and Dead Dog Leg corridors would be degraded by the additional truck traffic, but because the current experience includes existing traffic associated with the City and other facilities, the actual change in setting is expected to be slight.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Specific effects to recreation resources and opportunities under all pipeline route alternatives are expected to be the same as for the Proposed Action.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

### **Cumulative Effects**

The Albuquerque Drinking Water Project would add San Juan-Chama water to the Rio Chama and Rio Grande south to Albuquerque. The City of Española and Pueblo of San Ildefonso proposed projects would add San Juan-Chama water to the Rio Chama south to approximately the confluence with the Rio Grande. The Buckman Project would add San Juan-Chama water to the

Rio Chama and Rio Grande south to the proposed diversion site. These projects, when considered together, would result in increased year-round flow in the Rio Chama, Rio Grande, and the four reservoirs from Heron Dam to the proposed diversion structure at Paseo del Norte. This would have beneficial effects to recreational opportunities in the project area. The Buckman Project would add to this cumulative effect from Heron Dam to the proposed Buckman diversion facility.

The Supplemental Well Project, combined with this Buckman Water Diversion Project, would increase access to the project area for recreational purposes through improvements in existing access and development of new access. This would be beneficial for recreational opportunities. However, the use of acreage for above ground facilities, such as well heads, sedimentation ponds, and booster stations, would remove areas from recreational use and would negatively affect the overall recreational experience of the rest of the area. The anticipated future development of residential areas nearby would add to the negative effects. The Buckman Project would be additive to these beneficial and negative effects.

## Scenic Resources

In general, scenery is the aggregate of visual and auditory (noise) features that give character to the landscape and is an integrated part of ecosystem management. All lands administered by the BLM and FS are managed to achieve a specific level of visual or scenic quality. The two Federal agencies use different systematic processes to analyze the potential visual effects of proposed projects and activities. Both of these management systems are processes to provide resource managers with a method of determining visual values on Federally managed lands. The BLM's Taos Field Office Resource Management Plan is silent regarding visual management objectives in the Buckman Project area. Conversely, the FS has defined management objectives, as specified in the Santa Fe National Forest Management Plan, for FS lands within the area of the proposed Buckman Project.

In 1995, Santa Fe County published a report that evaluated and presented the results of a visual resources analysis of Santa Fe County. The study relied on both public and expert evaluation in identifying areas within the County that have significance for visual reasons. This study was initiated by the County because of widespread concern for the loss of scenic quality in the County (Santa Fe County 1995).

**BLM Visual Resource Management System.** BLM uses a Visual Resource Management (VRM) system. The VRM system includes a visual resource inventory, which classifies visual resources on BLM land into one of four categories (Class I, II, III, or IV), and sets management objectives through a resource management plan process. The inventory consists of a scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity level analysis, and a delineation of distance zones. Based on these three factors, BLM-administered lands are placed into one of the four VRM classes (BLM 1986a). In addition to inventory data, the VRM classes can reflect management considerations.

Each VRM class describes a different degree of modification allowed in the basic elements (form, line, color, and texture) found in the predominant natural features of the landscape. Table 19 provides additional information regarding the management objectives for the various VRM classes.

**Table 19. VRM Classes and Management Objectives.**

<b>BLM Visual Resources Management Class</b>	<b>Management Objectives</b>
Class I	Provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activities. Level of change should be very low and must not attract attention.
Class II	Retain the existing character of the landscape. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer.
Class III	Partially retain the existing character of the landscape. Level of change should be moderate but not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
Class IV	The objective of Class IV is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. Management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

(Source: BLM 1986)

The Taos Field Office has not classified the Buckman area for visual resources through the Resource Management Plan. Consequently, a preliminary visual resources field inventory was conducted in December 2002 in the project area. The inventory was limited to the area potentially affected by the project and is not as comprehensive as a formal resource inventory would be. The survey results are to be used only as a strong indication of the appropriate inventory class of public lands within the Buckman Project. Based on results of the field survey at the three primary locations of interest, the following VRM classes are preliminarily indicated.

- *Diversion and Sediment Facility.* The water diversion structure and sediment facility were viewed from White Rock Overlook Park's observation platform. This evaluation was conducted because BLM lands may be viewed from the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform. However, most scenery effects would occur directly on FS lands. The Buckman Project site would qualify under BLM criteria as a Class III.
- *Buckman Road and Dead Dog Well Corridors.* Substantial sections of the Buckman Road and Dead Dog Well corridors would qualify as Class IV. However, the section within a mile on either side of the Diablo Canyon staging area (parking area) would qualify as a Class III resource.
- *MRC WTP.* This site could qualify under BLM criteria as a Class III if evaluated from a foreground-middle ground zone or a Class IV if judged by background zone criteria. Generally, this site is expected to be viewed from a distance due to lack of site visitation.

**FS Scenery Management System.** The FS uses a Scenery Management System (SMS) that evolved from and replaces the Visual Management System (VMS) defined in Agricultural Handbook 462 (FS 1995). Corresponding SMS and VMS levels for existing scenic conditions and visual quality objectives (VQO) are compared in Table 20. Basically, the two systems differ in that the SMS emphasizes and increases the role of constituents throughout the inventory and planning process; and it borrows from and is integrated with the basic concepts and terminology of ecosystem management. The SMS provides for improved integration of aesthetics with other

biological, physical, and social/cultural resources in the planning process. Thus, the SMS actually incorporated additional factors when evaluating potential scenery effects and does not exclude any VMS factors.

**Table 20. Definition of terms and corresponding levels of existing scenic conditions between the Visual Management System and the Scenery Management System.**

<b>FS - Visual Management System</b>	<b>FS - Scenery Management System</b>	<b>Existing Landscape Character Being Viewed</b>	<b>Acreage of Management Area G</b>
Preservation	Very High	Landscape character is intact with only minute, if any, deviations.	0
Retention	High	Deviation may be present but blends in with the landscape character so they are not evident.	12,199
Partial Retention	Moderate	Landscape appears slightly altered.	40,144
Modification	Low	Landscape character appears moderately altered.	27,444
Maximum Modification	Very Low	Landscape character appears heavily altered.	147,205
No Corresponding Term	Unacceptably Low	Landscape character appears extremely altered.	NA

(Source: FS 1995)

The SMS process and terms are used in this analysis and, when necessary, VMS terms have been converted to the appropriate SMS term.

According to the Forest Plan, areas viewed in the foreground from communities, recreation areas, and high use roads and water bodies, as well as scenic backdrops from these areas, would have a management objective of “High.” Therefore, management activities would not be visually evident within 1 year of project completion.

Backdrops of less scenic quality or lands viewed in the foreground from lower use areas have a management objective of “Moderate.” Here, activities may be evident, but must remain subordinate to the characteristics of the landscape (FS 1987).

FS lands with the potential to be directly affected by the project lie within Management Area G. Management Area G is managed for visual quality objectives according to the levels identified in the forest visual resource inventory. Emphasis in this management area is on key wildlife habitat protection, habitat improvement, and forage and firewood production. Lands within Management Area G meet the categories of “Low” to “Moderate,” as the landscape currently appears slightly to moderately altered. Contiguous with Management Area G and in close proximity to the proposed project water diversion structure is Management Area L. Management of Area L focuses on maintaining semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation opportunities and providing the user with a moderate to high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of



humans. Thus, landscape deviations may be present but they blend in with the landscape character so they are not evident, and the management priority on maintaining this condition is “High.”

All proposed work that would be on Las Campanas, City, or County lands are compatible and compliant with existing land use plans or zoning ordinances. For the most part, existing utility corridors would be used for installation of the water distribution system on their lands.

### **Affected Environment**

People are concerned with the quality of their environment, including aesthetic values of landscapes, particularly scenery and spiritual values. Scenery with natural appearing landscapes enhances people’s lives and benefits society. Natural appearing landscapes serve as psychological and physiological “safety valves” for increasing urban population pressures and the increasing complexity of life (FS 2002). The following section is descriptive of the proposed project region.

**Viewsheds.** White Rock Canyon is the most striking landform feature at the terminus of Buckman Road. Here, the Rio Grande has incised its channel approximately 750 feet through overlying columnar jointed basalt. To the north is a prominent mesa called Buckman Mesa. Buckman Mesa is characterized by dark colored basaltic cliff bands at the upper elevations and aprons of talus and sediment that surround the entire structure. The Cañada Ancha is the principle drainage corridor for all lands surrounding the Buckman Road corridor. A component of Cañada Ancha and approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the Buckman Road terminus at the Rio Grande, there is a small, visually distinct canyon called Caja del Rio Canyon (Diablo Canyon). This area is readily viewed by recreational users including Rio Grande recreationists. Individuals using the northern portions of the White Rock Rim Trail, which is accessed from the residential neighborhoods in White Rock (Los Alamos County), and users of White Rock Overlook Park would also be afforded views of the Buckman Road terminus and adjacent terrain.

The natural environment at the proposed Buckman water diversion site consists of the Rio Grande and vegetation comprised of flood plain-plains riparian assemblages along the Rio Grande shoreline. Historically, along the Rio Grande in the project area, a settlement was established in 1889 and named for H. F. Buckman who cut timber and built sawmills on Pajarito Plateau. Buckman was also a station on the Chili Line or Denver and Rio Grande narrow gauge railroad that ran between Santa Fe and Antonito, Colorado. The current manmade environment of the Buckman Well Field includes booster stations and associated water tank, dirt and two-track roadways, and power lines. These structures are readily visible to site users and those using the White Rock observation platform. This area serves as a parking area for recreational users. Therefore, the scenic integrity appears slightly to moderately altered and the FS management regime would be consistent with the categories of “Low” to “Moderate.” However, the FS Forest Plan specifies a “High” management value for recreation areas and water bodies. The current structures present at Buckman are evident, with the exception of Well No. 8, and do not adequately repeat the form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the landscape character. Thus, the FS Forest Plan and actual site conditions appear in conflict. Many of the structures were built prior to completion of the 1987 FS Forest Plan and, therefore, were not out of compliance with the plan when originally constructed. Well No. 8 was constructed after issuance of the FS Forest Plan and blends in well with the landscape of the area.

Sights along the Buckman roadway range from: dense stands of piñon/juniper woodlands to open meadows; surface developments such as booster stations and electrical substation; utility

corridors that parallel the road along its entire length; livestock grazing; and off-road vehicles in the area. On the east side of the Buckman Road corridor, there are low relief, rolling hills that are characterized by piñon/juniper woodlands typical of the surrounding hills in the area. Watercourses through these hills exhibit a dendritic pattern and flow only when thunderstorms or water surpluses permit. The view to the west of Buckman Road around the Dead Dog Well area to the Rio Grande is of steep slopes leading up to a mesa top named Sagebrush Flats.

At Dead Dog Well the pipeline corridor splits. One route, Buckman Road, continues southeast toward Las Campanas paralleling utility corridors and booster stations and their associated water tanks. The other leg of the route continues south at Dead Dog Well and follows a utility corridor to the City of Santa Fe.

The MRC WTP is proposed for construction and operation on a small flat mesa in close proximity to Caja del Rio Road. The Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east and Jemez Mountains to the west comprise the distant viewshed. Power lines, housing, and, depending upon the viewer's location, facilities of the MRC can be seen along with other City infrastructure in the distance. The vegetation of the mesa is herbaceous with a varying density of piñon/juniper woodlands.

The western distribution route follows the western edge of Highway 599 to connect with existing County water pipelines located at the intersection of the I-25 frontage road and Erica Road. The route traverses through disturbed industrial areas and roadway ROW that support little native vegetation. Current City plans for this area are for trails, parking, a rest area and benches.

**Land Use.** Land use within the general area is varied. Designated land uses include grazing, harvesting for firewood and small wood products, recreation, utility corridors and easements, water wells and booster stations, and recreation. There are numerous existing utility infrastructure ROWs along the Buckman Road corridor. These ROWs meander back and forth across Buckman Road as they traverse the terrain on their course southeasterly. All but one of these utilities is buried within the Buckman easement; there is a high-tension power line that parallels the corridor.

**Lighting and Noise.** The only local direct sources of lighting along the Buckman Road and Dead Dog Leg corridor are at the existing booster stations and an electrical substation. Both direct and indirect lights (unnatural nighttime sky glow) can be seen within the project area and are the result of lights from the nearby communities of Las Campanas, Santa Fe, and White Rock.

Existing noise levels in the study area vary according to adjacent development and activity levels. Relatively low noise levels are experienced throughout much of the study area due to its rural character, including the vacant and undeveloped lands associated with the Santa Fe National Forest and BLM. The low noise levels generated in these areas are attributed to distant aircraft, light traffic on Buckman Road, recreational activity, and typical natural background noises. Several existing booster stations associated with the Buckman Well Field are also present in scattered locations throughout the study area and generate audible noise. Somewhat higher noise levels occur adjacent to study area roadways and in the developing areas associated with Las Campanas and other subdivisions. FS property south of the proposed diversion site, Area L, is designated for nonmotorized use. However, motorized vehicles (on-road and off-road recreational vehicles) are commonly observed in Area L near the proposed diversion site.

### Constituent Information

The visual resources inventory conducted by the County resulted in County constituents publicly nominating as an important scenic viewing point the view from the White Rock Overlook in Los Alamos County. The viewshed from White Rock is the Rio Grande Valley. Caja del Rio Canyon (Diablo Canyon) was nominated as a scenic place and Buckman Road was nominated in the scenic roads and trails category. This same study asked the public to rank 26 landscape character types from the most scenic (rank 1) to the least scenic (rank 26). The public ranked utility corridors as number 25, with only an industrial setting less scenic. Secondary roads and shrubland landscape character types were ranked 17 and 16, respectively (Santa Fe County 1995).

In support of BLM's VRM and the FS's SMS analysis, three data collection tasks were performed: White Rock Overlook Park observation platform interviews; Buckman Road vehicle counts by observations; and vehicle counts at Buckman Road using a mechanical counter. Data was collected in order to characterize the value people place on the Buckman water diversion site viewshed and the level of Buckman Road use as an indication of visitor use within the public lands of the proposed project area.

**White Rock Overlook Park Interviews.** Two interview sessions with the public visiting the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform located in the White Rock community of Los Alamos were performed. Each of the 113 people interviewed expressed comments as to the beauty of the surrounding area. All provided thematic adjectives such as pristine, breathtaking, spectacular, and other positive descriptions. However, there was a range of reaction regarding the potential modification of the Buckman area. The following statements illustrate the range:

#### Negative Reactions

“As you get older, you appreciate landscapes...start taking it away you'll never get it back. Don't develop.”

“It will kill the point of coming out, we can see a built environment in Chicago too. This showcases the whole Southwest and is similar to the Grand Canyon.”

“Leave it like it is [there are] fewer and fewer places of natural beauty.”

#### Transitional Reactions

“Water is more of an issue than the build-out.”

“Change the scenery...is it good or bad, difficult to answer.”

“The [existing] power lines are more disruptive than a building.”

#### Mitigative Reactions

“Buildings out there [you] don't really see at first, build with a historical context.”

“Construction should blend in.”

“[If] well done, [it] would not change dramatically the rest [viewshed] it is so big.”

There were no responses from visitors that indicated the project should go forth without some sort of viewshed mitigation. Of note were several comments regarding how the existing power lines to the northeast of the viewing platform were very intrusive and detracted from the landscape; how the existing buildings east of the Rio Grande should be painted to blend in with the landscape;

how the roadways that are constructed in straight lines draw attention to the manmade environment and disrupt the flow of the natural environment; and, when present, off-highway vehicle noise from east of the Rio Grande and in the local vicinity of the proposed Buckman diversion site was very noticeable and irritating, thereby, reducing the aesthetic experience.

**Buckman Road Use.** Data was collected specifically for this project via a mechanical vehicle counter and user observations. Average weekday use was approximately 19 vehicles while weekend use averaged about 50 vehicles per day. Survey data indicated that approximately 50 percent of the weekday use is work related while the vast majority of weekend users were there for recreational purposes.

### **Environmental Consequences**

The preponderance of project effects would occur from the construction and operation of facilities on BLM and FS lands. Proposed scenery mitigations specify that the project structures would be designed to incorporate the color, form, texture and line of the surrounding landscape. Thus, the proposed project would be compatible with BLM's VRM and the FS's SMS objectives. Noise environmental consequences are addressed in the following section, "Noise."

#### **No Action Alternative**

There would be no effects to scenic resources if the proposed project is not constructed. No new structures would be built and no new scenic elements would be introduced.

#### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

**Construction Effects.** Construction activities at the Rio Grande and immediately adjacent areas would be noticeable by site users and visitors to the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform. Visual or aesthetic effects and increased noise levels would be a consequence of construction of the cofferdam and other facilities and infrastructure, construction equipment movement and noise, and removal of vegetation. These effects would be short term and last for the approximate 5-month construction schedule. Similarly, placement of pipelines and electrical facilities and road upgrades would result in construction activities noticeable by vehicle occupants driving on roadways adjacent to the new facilities. Pipeline and road construction could take up to 1 year to complete. However, peak activities would be approximately 4 to 8 months. MRC WTP and Las Campanas WTP construction activities and effects would be similar to the diversion site and last for approximately 24 months and 10 months, respectively.

**Operation Effects.** The proposed water diversion structure would extend approximately 15 feet from the east bank into the Rio Grande. The Rio Grande at the diversion site is around 50 to 60 feet wide. Thus, the operation of a water diversion structure and associated infrastructure would be within the foreground view of river users (boaters) and site visitors and could be seen at a distance from the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform. However, the mitigation design features of the diversion structure that would incorporate the form, line, color, and texture of the riverbank environment would serve to blend it in with the surrounding river environment. After vegetation is re-established, the facility would not be readily apparent to the site visitor or viewshed observers at White Rock Overlook Park. Boaters would be aware of the structure as they proceed past, but again, due to the design, it would be compatible with the river environment and not introduce a highly discordant element into the riverscape. Both the BLM and FS would review and approve the proposed architectural design as part of the special use permit stipulations.

Booster Station 1A and the sediment facility would be apparent to the casual site user and viewed from White Rock Overlook. These facilities would be the most intrusive visual element.

However, construction of these facilities at the townsite of Buckman using historical architecture that is compatible with the landscape character (form, line, color, and texture) would maintain the historical and cultural context. Project mitigation measures specify that the facilities would be designed to blend in with the landscape and history of the area. Both the BLM and FS would review and approve the proposed architectural design as part of the special use permit stipulations. Thus, these structures would be compliant with a “Moderate” FS scenic integrity management level. The design would also be consistent with BLM’s VRM Class III.

Buckman Road improvements would consist of the addition of gravel and drainage ditches, low water crossings, and realignment to improve the line-of-sight at some road bends. Surfacing with gravel would increase the reflectivity of the road and introduce a different color element to existing conditions. Buckman Road would become even more apparent to the casual viewer. As a result of the improvements, there would be moderate visual contrasts with existing landscape characteristics. In addition, because there will be necessary vegetative manipulation as part of road improvements, modifications to the landscape will be apparent, but signs of disturbance would be short duration (less than 2 years). The negative effects would be partially mitigated by use of colored additives in the concrete at all dip sections to minimize the visual contrast with the existing landscape (Figure 15). In addition, signs marking speed limit and curves would require construction in a manner compatible with the settings by constructing and finishing both signs and support posts from materials that are acceptable for a given ROS setting. Other Buckman Road improvements through Diablo Canyon would result in changes that will be noticeable to site visitors. The major changes would occur along three major curves in the Diablo Canyon area. Straightening of the road, tree removal, and roadway signage would decrease the sense of isolation experienced by the casual visitor. However, the existing landscape character would be partially retained, thus, meeting the Class III management objectives. Concrete for the low water crossing would be textured and colored to blend in with the surrounding environment, thus, moderating any visual effects to streambed crossings. The total area affected by road improvements would be about 22 acres over about 9.2 miles of road and, for the most part, would be limited to about 10 feet on either side of the road.

Buckman Road improvements would provide easier access but, in some areas, would still present a challenge to low-clearance passenger vehicles, to a relatively scarce river use visitation point. Thus, it is reasonable to expect an increase in visitor use within the project area, but an increase that is not predictable. On public lands, this may result in more vehicles and pressures placed upon the land from various and increased recreation activities and subsequent deterioration of the viewshed. Increased vehicle traffic (vehicle movement) could substantially affect the viewshed and users’ perceptions of the scenic integrity. Road improvements would be consistent with BLM’s Class III/IV management objective along Buckman Road and with the FS Forest Management Plan objective of “Moderate” at the Buckman diversion site. Area L could be affected if truck traffic and visitor use increased in the area of the Buckman Project. There could be boundary deterioration between Area G and Area L with the Area L users having a reduced probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans.

Generally, existing utility corridors and booster station locations would be used which would serve to minimize additional effects to the scenic environment. The revegetation of construction scarred areas with plants native to the region would limit visual effects. Once plants are re-established, pipeline corridors would blend in with existing conditions. Booster station

architecture that incorporates the color, form, texture and line of the surrounding landscape would serve to minimize the visual effect of additional structures. Both the BLM and FS would review and approve the proposed architectural design as part of the special use permit stipulations.

The proposed MRC WTP and associated power substation location was selected to reduce viewshed effects compared to other locations. The facilities would be designed to blend into the color, form, texture and line of the surrounding landscape. Thus, they would not be readily evident to a distant viewer after successful vegetation re-establishment. The level of change to the foreground/middle ground perspective would be moderate due to the extent and prominence of the treatment facilities and associated infrastructure. Thus, the Proposed Action would be compatible with existing site conditions and with BLM's Class III/IV management objectives. However, the proposed development is different from the City's previous concept for trails, parking, a rest area and benches. The BLM would review and approve the proposed architectural design as part of the special use permit stipulations.

Pipeline corridors on City, County, and Las Campanas lands would occur in and are compatible with a built environment. Buckman Project pipeline corridors would follow or are in existing utility corridors and/or within roadside easements.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

The construction and operation effects are similar to the Proposed Action with the following exceptions.

**Construction Effects.** Alternatives SF1 and SF2 would construct Booster Station 1A and the sediment facility substantially out of the viewshed of the White Rock Overlook Park observation platform and in a location that would be much less noticeable to the Rio Grande area recreational user.

**Operation Effects.** Placement of the sediment and booster station facilities further southeast of the proposed location, under Alternatives SF1 and SF2, would place them substantially out of the White Rock Overlook viewshed and the facilities would not be visible to Rio Grande boaters or other visitors to the river front area. During the project design phase, if feasible, all facilities would be placed out of the White Rock Overlook viewshed. Thus, compared to the Proposed Action, effects to visual resources would be greatly reduced.

However, selection of Alternative SF2 would require trucking out sediment and would require two sediment storage ponds measuring 75 feet by 150 feet and 8 feet deep. Sediment collected for disposal would be stored and dried in these ponds. Drying sediment would be a different color than the surrounding environment and would be noticeable from some higher elevation viewing locations (i.e., Sagebrush Flats). Additional truck traffic caused by selection of SF2 (sand hauling alternative) would add to the conditions that are already unacceptable for Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized/Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS settings for the Social Encounters criterion.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative RWP1 would have construction and operation effects similar to the Proposed Action. All pipeline route alternatives would be compatible with BLM's Class III management objective; however, some would have less visual impact than others.

Alternative TWP1 would require construction and operation of the treated water pipeline in a new ROW corridor along BLM and Las Campanas lands. Approximately 17 acres would be affected by construction of Alternative TWP1. Alternative TWP2 would install the treated water pipeline back along the Dead Dog Well corridor and then cut east and would affect approximately 20 acres, some of which would be in a new ROW corridor. Alternative TWP3 would use approximately 27 acres of existing utility line ROW. Construction and establishment of a new pipeline corridor (Alternatives TWP1 and TWP2) would effect the local viewshed by introducing a straight line swathe and bare ground. Even with revegetation, the new corridor would be noticeable in the short term until vegetation is re-established. Trees would not be allowed to re-establish. However, feathering tree removal, which would be a special permit stipulation, would serve to soften the notably straight lines of the pipeline corridor. Development of a new corridor could encourage changes to and increased recreation use in the area and subsequent degradation to the natural viewshed.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1a would result in construction and operation of a substation approximately 1 mile southeast of the MRC WTP adjacent to the existing power line. This is an area where there are overhead power lines (60-foot-tall poles with high-tension wires). The substation would add another visual element in the viewshed of some houses present along Caja del Rio Road, as well as people golfing at the municipal golf course. While still compatible with a BLM's Class III management objective, the substation would degrade the viewshed along Caja del Rio Road when compared to the Proposed Action of a substation adjacent to the MRC WTP.

In Alternative AGP1b, overhead power lines from the proposed diversion intake site to Booster Station 2A would be apparent to site visitors and introduce a discordant visual element into the river landscape. The scenic integrity would still meet the FS Scenery Management System of "Moderate." However, the FS Forest Plan specifies a "High" management value for recreation areas and water bodies. Of additional note is the adverse reaction to power lines expressed by those interviewed during the scenic resources analysis. This alternative would add to the degradation of the scenic viewshed.

### **Cumulative Effects**

The City has drilled four new supplemental water wells on land administered by the BLM along Buckman Road. Buckman Road users are able to see all four well locations. The supplemental water wells project is additive to the construction and operation of proposed Booster Stations 2A and 3A along Buckman Road. These projects add more manmade elements into the natural environment. Construction and operation of the MRC WTP would be additive with the construction and occupation of residential housing in the surrounding viewshed. Facility and residential housing designs are sensitive to blending in with the natural landscape, however, each introduces additional manmade elements into the natural environment.

## **Noise**

### **Affected Environment**

The relative loudness of a sound or noise is described in units of decibels (dB), a measure of sound pressure on a logarithmic scale. Noise conditions are usually described by a time-averaged

noise level, expressed as the equivalent noise level (Leq). An A-weighting filter is also used to correlate physical noise levels with the frequency sensitivity of human hearing and the subjective response to noise. Thus, noise conditions are generally discussed in terms of hourly average A-weighted noise levels in decibels (Leq dBA). The average noise level occurring over a 24-hour period is usually described as a day-night average noise level (Ldn), and includes adding 10 decibels to sound levels occurring during nighttime hours (between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.).

Existing noise levels in the study area vary according to adjacent development and activity levels. Relatively low noise levels are experienced throughout much of the study area due to its rural character, including the vacant and undeveloped lands managed by the FS and BLM. Relatively low noise levels in these areas are attributed to light traffic on Buckman Road, recreational activities, distant aircraft, and typical natural background noises. Somewhat higher noise levels occur adjacent to Buckman Road and in the developing areas associated with Las Campanas and nearby subdivisions.

Motorized vehicles (on-road and off-road recreational vehicles) are commonly observed near the proposed diversion site, which also serves as a parking area for recreational users. Occasional use of motorized vehicles and recreational activities results in intermittent noise in the area. Several existing pump houses associated with the Buckman Well Field are also present in scattered locations throughout the study area and generate audible noise. FS property located south of the proposed diversion site, Area L, is designated for nonmotorized use.

Noise levels of 65 Ldn as the upper threshold for acceptable noise levels at noise sensitive locations. Noise conditions in the project area were evaluated by performing field noise measurements at several locations where noise levels may change as a consequence of the project. Noise levels were recorded at eight locations, including a site near the proposed diversion structure, along the existing pipeline alignment for the Buckman Well Field, and at several existing pump houses in the pipeline corridor. A-weighted average noise levels (Leq dBA) were collected in 10-minute intervals at each location (Table 21).

Most Federal agencies use similar criteria to evaluate noise effects and to determine the noise compatibility for different land use categories. These criteria, referred to as Land Use Compatibility Guidelines, were developed in 1980 by the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise. Based on these guidelines, most agencies define residences, schools, churches, and outdoor recreation areas as sensitive to noise impacts. BLM's Farmington Field Office uses a noise standard of 48.6 dBA Leq (defined as the A-weighted noise level averaged over a 24-hour period) at a distance of 300 feet from the noise source. A review of the BLM standard indicates that the 48.6 dBA noise threshold is equivalent to the 65 Ldn dBA at a distance of 100 feet from the noise source. To simplify the discussion, the noise analysis refers to the 65 Ldn dBA noise criteria used by most Federal agencies. However, exceedences of the 65 Ldn dBA on BLM lands would also imply a noise impact according to the Farmington Field Office's standard.



**Table 21. Measured  $L_{eq}$  and estimated  $L_{dn}$  noise levels.**

Description of Monitoring Location	Measured Noise Level (Leq dBA)	Estimated Day-Night Level (Ldn)
1) River – at proposed intake structure (rushing water)	54.0	60.4
2) Near River – in parking area	38.4	44.8
3) Proposed pipeline alignment – between Booster Stations 1 & 2	20.0	26.4
4) Booster Station 2 – 100 feet from pump house	51.7	58.1
5) Booster Station 2 – 1,000 feet from pump house	36.0	42.4
6) Booster Station 3 – 100 feet from pump house	53.6	60.1
7) Booster Station 3 – 500 feet from pump house	35.5	41.9
8) Booster Station 4 – 100 feet from pump house	51.9	58.3

(Source: Data obtained during project-specific noise surveys)

Existing noise levels at the eight monitoring sites are generally well below the 65 Ldn threshold. Slightly higher noise levels were observed immediately adjacent to the existing pump houses associated with the Buckman Well Field. However, noise levels at the fence line for each of these facilities was below 65 Ldn, and noise levels were observed to rapidly diminish within a few hundred feet of each pump house.

## Environmental Consequences

### No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not alter noise conditions in the study area. Noise levels in the recreational areas near the river would continue to be primarily influenced by recreational activities and natural noises. Noise near the existing booster station in the Buckman Well Field would remain consistent with existing noise levels. Typical neighborhood noises and traffic noise would increase in and near the developing residential subdivisions as these areas continue to develop.

### Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action

**Construction Effects.** The project would increase noise levels in highly localized locations associated with the specific components of the diversion project. Construction activities would increase noise levels in the study area. These areas include portions of the associated pipelines along Buckman Road where trenching activities would occur and where construction vehicles would be passing as they arrive and leave the study area during the construction period. Construction activities would occur in several locations throughout the study area, including the diversion structure, sediment facility, booster stations, and WTPs. A variety of construction equipment would be used, including trenching equipment such as backhoes or excavators, loaders, graders, cranes, haul trucks, semi-trailer trucks, and cement trucks. At the diversion site, during construction, the pumps associated with the cofferdams would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, because much of the study area is undeveloped, construction activities would generally not result in substantial noise effects.

Construction noise would be noticed in the developed areas of the Las Campanas subdivision and other developing areas along Buckman Road. Construction activities would include the use of heavy machinery to complete the trenching, pipe installation, compaction, and backfilling associated with the new water, gas, and power lines. Buckman Road would also be used as the primary route for construction equipment and hauling operations during construction. Daily truck operations during construction would average approximately 50 heavy trucks per day on Buckman Road, with peaks of over 100 trucks per day. Truck traffic would include cement trucks, semitrailers, and haul trucks. These truck operations and construction activities would produce nuisance noise for residents along Buckman Road in the Las Campanas Subdivision and could cause wildlife to temporarily vacate the immediate location. However, these operations would only occur during the construction phase of the project.

**Operation Effects.** Noise levels would increase slightly during operation as a result of pumping and equipment noise at booster stations and the WTPs. However, since lands near these facilities are currently vacant, and based on the type of pumping equipment that would be used and how the mechanical equipment would be housed/constructed, noise would not adversely affect adjacent land uses or populations. Predicted noise levels near each of the project facilities are also generally considered acceptable for recreational areas.

Operational noise associated with the project would consist of noise generated by the booster stations, which may operate and generate noise 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The five new booster stations would be built in various locations in the project area. These booster stations would be similar to the existing booster stations present in the Buckman Well Field, with the pumping equipment enclosed in roofed structures constructed with concrete masonry blocks. Because the future booster stations would have pumping equipment and masonry enclosures similar to those used at the existing stations, noise generated from pumps at the new booster stations is expected to be similar to noise levels generated by the existing booster stations. This assumption is used as a basis for predicting future noise levels associated with the proposed booster station sites.

The potential for noise emanating from the diversion pumps would be virtually nonexistent. The pumps would be of the canned submersible vertical turbine type, wherein the motor and rotating impeller elements would be totally submerged and entirely enclosed within a steel can some 20 feet below the ground level. The top of the pump cans would be located within a buried concrete vault and connected directly to buried discharge piping a minimum of 4 feet below ground.

The booster stations would be constructed alongside two existing booster stations (Booster Stations 2A and 3A) and at three locations where no pumps are currently present (Booster Stations 1A, 4A and 5A). For the purposes of a conservative analysis, each future pump station was assumed to generate the equivalent of two of the existing stations. Future noise levels near each booster station were estimated using logarithmic addition, wherein a doubling of sound energy produces an increase of 3 decibels. Noise levels at different distances were estimated using the principle of simple attenuation from a point source (noise attenuation is expressed as a function of 20 times the logarithm of the reference distance divided by the distance to the receiver). Table 22 provides the estimated average noise levels ( $L_{eq}$ ) and day-night average noise levels ( $L_{dn}$ ) at various distances from the proposed booster stations and the diversion structure.

As shown in Table 22, noise levels at the proposed booster stations (with dual pump houses) would be approximately 56.6 decibels (63.1 Ldn) at a distance of 100 feet. This 100-foot distance generally corresponds to the distance between the existing booster stations and the fenced enclosure surrounding each of the facilities. Therefore, noise levels at the fence line of the future booster stations are expected to remain below 65 Ldn, and not exceed the upper noise threshold established by most Federal agencies for noise sensitive locations, such as residences, schools, churches, and outdoor recreation areas. While compatible with current and future land uses, faint noise from the booster stations may be audible in some areas (as far as a quarter mile away) where current noise levels are very low (in the low 30 decibel range).

**Table 22. Estimated noise levels at various distances from future booster facilities (L<sub>dn</sub>).**

Distance From Booster Stations	L <sub>eq</sub> dBA	L <sub>dn</sub>
100 feet	56.6	63.1
500 feet	42.6	49.1
1,320 feet (1/4 mile)	34.2	40.6

(Source: Data obtained during project-specific noise surveys)

### Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives

**Construction Effects.** Construction noise associated with the various sediment facility alternatives is expected to be similar to the Proposed Action, but would vary by location. Because both of these potential sediment facility sites are located in undeveloped areas, construction activities would not affect any noise sensitive locations. Since construction equipment and construction vehicles would access the sediment facility sites via the same route, Buckman Road, Alternative SF1 is not expected to produce different noise effects in existing residential areas during the construction period.

The location of Alternative SF2 would be the same as Alternative SF1 and, therefore, effects from construction of the facility itself would be the same as Alternative SF1 and the Proposed Action.

**Operation Effects.** Operation of the various sediment alternatives would be similar, with the exception of the SF2 Alternative. The Proposed Action and Alternative SF1 would return sand collected by the sediment facility back to the river. Alternative SF1 and SF2 would locate the sediment facility and booster station further away from the river, thereby reducing the level of noise at the river. Alternative SF2 would retain sand accumulated with the diverted river water at the sediment facility site. This alternative would require stockpiling the accumulated sand and periodically loading the sand on trucks and hauling it away from the facility site. It is anticipated that loading and hauling the sand would occur intermittently and require up to 1,000 truck trips per year. Haul trucks used for this purpose would likely use Buckman Road to transport the sand to either the Caja del Rio Landfill or to local sand and gravel operators. Therefore, compared to the other action alternatives, Alternative SF2 would result in more truck traffic noise periodically to residents along Buckman Road and more noise during removal of sand from the sediment facility.

### Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives

**Construction Effects.** Construction of the various pipeline routes would involve trenching, pipe installation, compaction, and backfilling associated with the new pipelines. Noise effects from the alternatives would be less than the Proposed Action since the route under the Proposed Action is much closer to the Las Campanas Subdivision. These trenching and pipeline installation activities

may result in short-term nuisance noise in some areas, but they would be transient in nature and end when construction was complete.

**Operation Effects.** Once the pipeline system is installed, it would not produce noise regardless of its location. Therefore, none of the pipeline alternatives would result in operational noise effects.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Ambient noise levels would increase area wide as the Las Campanas Subdivision and nearby areas continue to develop with residential uses. This residential development would increase land use intensity and produce additional traffic in the area. Noise associated from the additional development is expected to outweigh noise from the project facilities. However, the future noise environment and cumulative noise effects are expected to be typical for residential areas.

## **Air Quality**

### **Affected Environment**

The Federal Clean Air Act of 1970 and its amendments established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect the public from harmful levels of common pollutants in ambient air. The NAAQS establish maximum allowable concentrations for six major air pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), lead (Pb) and particulate matter (PM).

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Air Quality Bureau (AQB) operates three permanent air quality monitors in Santa Fe: one near Cerrillos Road, one near St. Francis Drive and one near Old Pecos Trail. No exceedences of ambient air quality standards have been recorded at these monitors, and the County is currently classified by EPA as being in attainment of all Federal ambient air quality standards.

No major stationary or mobile sources of air pollutants occur within or adjacent to the project area. Limited traffic volumes on Buckman Road and adjacent roadways are insufficient to generate substantial concentrations of mobile-source pollutants. According to the AQB, current well sites in the Buckman Well Field operate with natural gas combustion engines. However, these small booster stations do not generate sufficient emissions to require individual air quality permitting by AQB. Because of the area's generally low development levels and the lack of major emission sources, high pollutant concentrations do not occur in the study area.

### **Environmental Consequences**

#### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative would not affect air quality in the study area. Air quality conditions would be influenced by small emission sources in the area, including local roadways and activities associated with the area's development (e.g., residential wood burning). Air quality emissions would be expected to increase somewhat as the Las Campanas Subdivision continues

to develop. However, based on the rural nature of the project area and the absence of major pollutant sources in the area, high pollutant concentrations are not expected.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

**Construction Effects.** Minor temporary air quality effects would occur as a result of construction activities, including dust from earthwork and emissions from heavy construction equipment. These effects would be minimized by requiring contractors to be responsible for dust and sediment control. Dust control would involve the application of dust suppressants where appropriate, covering haul trucks, and limiting disturbance to only areas that are necessary. Temporary and permanent fencing would be used in some areas to limit construction disturbance and silt fences would be installed for sediment control. Additionally, the contractor would be responsible for ensuring that all construction equipment meets Federal emissions standards.

**Operation Effects.** Proposed Buckman Road improvements to add subbase and surface gravel would serve to reduce dust generated during vehicle passage. The additional booster stations for the project would operate using natural gas combustion engines. Based on the limited scale of the pumping equipment proposed for the project, air quality effects would not occur. As the project proceeds into its design stages, additional consultation would occur with the NMED to determine if air quality permits would be required. This additional review and permitting process would ensure that substantial pollutant concentrations would not occur as a consequence of the project.

It is estimated that the pumping equipment to be used at the diversion structure and at the booster stations would operate similarly to those currently present in the Buckman Well Field. According to the NMED AQB, emissions from these facilities do not exceed thresholds that require air quality permitting. Therefore, pollutant concentrations attributed to these facilities are expected to remain well below NAAQS in the vicinity of each booster station. However, as part of final design for the project, the AQB would be consulted (via a preapplication meeting) to determine if the additional booster stations would exceed emissions thresholds for facilities that require permitting. This process would ensure that air quality effects would not occur and that exceedences of Federal ambient air quality standards would not occur in the study area.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

**Construction Effects.** Construction effects of Alternative SF1 are expected to be similar to the Proposed Action but would vary by location. Because the alternative sediment facility site is located in an undeveloped area, construction activities at the alternative site would not affect any populated areas. Since construction equipment and construction vehicles would access the sediment facility site via the same route as the Proposed Action, Buckman Road, Alternative SF1 is not expected to produce different nuisance dust and exhaust emissions in existing residential areas associated with the Las Campanas Subdivision during the construction period.

The location of Alternative SF2 would be the same as Alternative SF1 and, therefore, effects from construction of the facility itself would be the same as Alternative SF1 and the Proposed Action. Minor temporary air quality effects, including dust from earthwork and emissions from heavy construction equipment, would be minimized by requiring contractors to be responsible for dust and sediment control. Dust control would involve the application of dust suppressants where appropriate, covering haul trucks, and limiting disturbance to only areas that are necessary. Temporary and permanent fencing would be used in some areas to limit construction disturbance

and silt fences would be installed for sediment control. Additionally, the contractor would be responsible for ensuring that all construction equipment meets Federal emissions standards.

**Operation Effects.** Operation of Alternative SF1 would not produce additional air quality emissions. The effects would be very similar to the Proposed Action, but would vary by location, with the exception of Alternative SF2. The Proposed Action and Alternative SF1 would return sand collected from the intake structure back to the river. Alternative SF2 would retain sand at the sediment facility site. This alternative would require stockpiling the accumulated sand and periodically loading the sand on trucks and hauling it away from the facility site. It is anticipated that loading and hauling the sand would occur intermittently and require up to 1,000 truck operations per year. Haul trucks used for this purpose would likely use Buckman Road to transport the sand to either a landfill or to local sand and gravel operators. Therefore, compared to the other action alternatives, Alternative SF2 would result in more truck traffic on Buckman Road. These operations would potentially cause periodic nuisance dust and exhaust emissions to residents along Buckman Road, and would not be expected to exceed any NAAQS standards. Improvements (gravel) to Buckman Road would serve to minimize dust generation.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

**Construction Effects.** Construction of the various pipeline routes would involve trenching, pipe installation, compaction, and backfilling associated with the new water lines. These activities would result in temporary increases in nuisance dust and vehicle exhaust emission during construction. Air quality effects from the alternatives would be less than the Proposed Action since the route under the Proposed Action is much closer to the Las Campanas Subdivision. These trenching and pipeline installation activities may result in short-term nuisance air emissions in some areas, but they would be transient in nature and end when construction was complete.

**Operation Effects.** Once the pipeline system is installed, it would not produce air quality emissions regardless of its location. Therefore, none of the pipeline alternatives would result in operational air quality effects.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Pollutant emissions would increase area wide as the Las Campanas Subdivision and nearby areas continue to develop with residential uses. This residential development would increase land use intensity and produce additional traffic in the area. Emissions associated with the additional development are expected to outweigh any emissions from project facilities. However, based on the limited density of development proposed for the area and the absence of major pollutant sources, cumulative air quality emissions would not produce exceedences of Federal ambient air quality standards or threaten the air quality status of the area.

## Geology and Soils

### Affected Environment

The Buckman area is dominated by quaternary alluvium that has been deposited by the Rio Grande and the ephemeral Cañada Ancha (Balleau 1995). Igneous rocks of the area can be segregated into Tertiary and Quaternary extrusives of the Jemez Mountains (BOR/City of Albuquerque 2004).

The alluvium is underlain by the Tesuque Formation of the Santa Fe Group, which consists of many thousands of feet of Tertiary basin-fill sandstone with interbedded siltstone and claystones. The Tesuque Formation is an important regional aquifer throughout much of northern Santa Fe County, and the City has completed nine deep production wells in the Tesuque Formation in the Buckman area since 1972 (Balleau 1995).

The project area is within the Española Basin. The Pojoaque and Puye fault zones, minor fault zones closest to the project area, run generally north-south in the Española Basin. Seismic activity was present during the Tertiary period, as evidenced by faulting in the area; however, there has been no displacement of these faults during the last 10,000 years. However, a fault structure discovered recently in the Buckman Well Field area was likely reactivated along a previous fault zone and may have been caused by the withdrawal of water from aquifer storage in the Buckman area.

At no point does the project area enter lands directly adjacent to and beneath the talus slope flanking the rim of Caja del Rio Plateau.

There is no mining within or adjacent to the project area for leasable or locatable minerals.

The entire project area is within the Western Soil Region, one of six major soil regions in New Mexico. Soils on the steeper slopes are generally shallow, moderately fine textured, and contain a high percentage of coarse fragments. Mesa tops, plateaus, and lava flows have soils that are shallow to moderately deep, and moderately coarse to medium textured. Cobbles and stones are common to soils developing on flood plains of the Rio Grande and Cañada Ancha (BLM 1988).

Soils along the Buckman and Dead Dog Leg corridors generally have a thin, sandy clay loam A horizon and a gravelly, sandy clay loam C horizon that grades into a sandy, gravelly parent material with depth. In general, the soils are poorly developed on the ridges and show more development on the flat areas (BLM 1972).

Productivity of soils within the project area are relatively low, supporting a community of piñon-juniper savannah. Interspersed between the trees are drought tolerant grasses, shrubs, and forbs as well as several cactus species. Historically and presently, livestock grazing activities occur along the corridor resulting in obvious signs of disturbance, and very little grass is left at the most highly impacted sites. Where most of the grasses have been removed, signs of erosion are present. The soils in the project area have moderate to high erosion potentials. While much of the project area is on relatively flat to slightly rolling terrain, evidence of erosion is present at select locations. Much of the runoff in the area is in the form of sheetwash that becomes channelized as it meets the Cañada Ancha. In previously disturbed locations with greater slope, erosion is generally problematic and rill and gullies are present. In areas where vegetative stabilization has

been greatly impacted or removed by livestock, past construction, rock fall, recreation activities, or other disturbances, intensified erosion prevails.

Due to the relatively abundant coarse material and sands in the soils throughout the project area, compaction tends to be relatively low. The sandy soils are well drained and tend to dry quickly after a precipitation event, which in turn limits soil compaction from overburdened sources. However, road grading practices and unrestricted use of Buckman Road during wet weather has resulted in an incised—in some places over 2 feet below the surrounding topography—roadbed characterized by washboarding and poor drainage conditions. Overland sheet flow is intercepted by Buckman Road and channelized into the roadside drainage ditches. This condition has resulted in altered watershed drainage patterns and decreased water availability in some areas downslope of Buckman Road. Runoff from damaged road surfaces is at a higher velocity than the normal overland sheet flow. Therefore, roadway drainage waters have a greater erosion potential and capability of carrying a higher sediment load that is deposited in surrounding streambeds and ultimately transported to the Rio Grande. Interception of overland flow by Buckman Road also results in reduced infiltration, thus contributing to additional surface runoff.

## **Environmental Consequences**

### **No Action Alternative**

If the No Action Alternative is selected, construction and operation of the diversion structure and associated infrastructure would not occur. No short- or long-term direct or indirect effects to geology or soils resources would result due to implementation of the No Action Alternative.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

Implementation of soil erosion mitigation measures coupled with the revegetation program would prevent adverse effects to soil resources.

**Construction Effects.** Best management practices would be employed by construction contractors to minimize project-related effects. Construction activities that require ground disturbance would cause minimal increases in erosion because of the implementation of erosion control measures (i.e. silt fencing, gabion mats, etc.). Mitigation measures would reduce the loss of soil, prevent the establishment or exacerbation of rill and gullies, and minimize water quality deterioration that would be associated with construction and roadway use by project vehicles. Erosion control measures would be designed in compliance with the requirements for preparation of a storm water pollution prevention plan to mitigate negative effects.

**Operation Effects.** Buckman Road improvements would result in better distribution of storm water and decreased erosion that could result in minor watershed benefits. Implementation of a revegetation program (biological resources mitigation) that would result in the mulching of construction scarred areas coupled with the re-establishment of plant cover would provide a level of protection against wind and waterborne soil erosion. This project requirement would further mitigate effects to soil resources for the duration of the project.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Specific effects to soil resources are expected to be the same as for the Proposed Action.



### Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Specific effects to soil resources are expected to be the same as for the Proposed Action.

### Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

### Cumulative Effects

No specific geology and soils resources cumulative effects have been identified.

## Social and Economic Resources

### Affected Environment

#### Population and Housing, Growth and Dynamics

The area of potential effect includes the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, and Las Campanas. The total population for Santa Fe County, as enumerated by the 2000 U.S. Census, was 129,292. As can be seen in Table 23, almost 81 percent of that total live in the central region of the County, 62 percent live in the Santa Fe urban area, and 48 percent, or 62,203 people, live within the City of Santa Fe. The County is growing faster (30.7 percent) than the State of New Mexico (20.1 percent between 1990-2000). The County is also growing faster than the City, continuing a trend first seen in 1980, when 65 percent of the County population lived within the City limits. In 1990, 57 percent of the County population lived within the City limits.

**Table 23. Santa Fe County and sub-area population, 1990 and 2000.**

Area	1990	2000	Percent of County 2000	Change 1990-2000 Number (percent)
Santa Fe County	98,928	129,292	100.0%	30,364 (30.7%)
Central Region	81,451	104,601	80.9	23,150 (28.4%)
Total Urban Area	66,541	79,545	61.5	13,004 (19.5%)
City of Santa Fe	55,859	62,203	48.1	6,344 (11.4%)

(Source: UNM 2002)

Almost half (49 percent) of the County's population reports themselves as being of Hispanic or Latino origin; 45.5 percent reported as white persons, not of Hispanic or Latino origin; and 3.1 percent reported as American Indian and Alaska Native persons. Santa Fe County is also multilingual; only 63 percent of residents reporting on the 2000 U.S. Census speak only English in the home.

Over 50 percent of the population 15 years and older were married when the 2000 U.S. Census was conducted. Almost 30 percent of the residents report having never been married. Females account for approximately 51 percent of the population of Santa Fe County; almost 25 percent of families have a female head of household with no husband present. The median age in Santa Fe County is 37.9 years, reflecting the nationwide trend of an aging population.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 23,538 children were enrolled in kindergarten through high school in Santa Fe County in April 2000. Almost 8,300 people were enrolled in junior college, college, or graduate school. Of the population over age 25, 84.5 percent have a high school diploma or better; almost 37 percent have a bachelor's degree or more college education.

More housing is being built outside the City limits, and the City is permitting fewer residential units—510 per year during the 1992-2001 period, down from an average of 687 units in the previous 10 years (UNM 2002) or a 35 percent decrease in the 10-year period. Reasons for this include the higher price of land and the requirement to hook up to municipal services in the City limits. Average population per household in Santa Fe County is 2.42 people; the Santa Fe Northwest Community Plan estimates that household size in the Las Campanas area is much lower, conservatively estimated at 2 people for full-time residents (SNAC 1999).

According to the U.S. Census, the median value of Santa Fe County owner-occupied housing units in 2000 was \$189,400. Many of the most expensive homes in the County do not meet the census definition of owner-occupied, being second or seasonal homes for people who are legal residents of another state. This skews the median value presented in the census downward from Board of Realtor statistics, which includes all existing and new single-family detached homes. During the second quarter of 2000, which includes the day the census is taken, the board reports that the median home sales price in Santa Fe County was \$250,000; in the north section of the County, the median price was \$540,250 during the same reporting period (MLS 2000). During the last quarter of 2002, the last full reporting period, median price of a house County wide was \$276,000, while the median sales price of a house in the north section of the County was \$535,000 (MLS 2002).

Las Campanas, a private community 6 miles northwest of Santa Fe in Santa Fe County, currently has approximately 410 houses built and occupied and has plans for a total of 1,700 houses at full build-out. Estate sites at Las Campanas range from less than 1 acre to more than 5 acres in size and begin at \$250,000 up to \$1.5 million. Smaller home sites designed for semicustom houses are priced lower. Homes range between \$950,000 and \$2.5 million depending on size and location.

Another important aspect of the housing sector is the rental market because it can indicate problems for lower income and/or younger residents who are not able to qualify for homeownership. The number of rental units appears to have remained stable during the past 10 years although the demand (vacancy rate) has increased, as have the median rents. (Table 24)

Tables 25 and 26 summarize the population and housing projections based on no water shortages, an unlikely scenario even with the completion of the Proposed Action. The Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of New Mexico projects that the population of Santa Fe County would increase to 158,624 people by 2010 (UNM 2002). Based on the decreasing percentage of County residents living within the City limits, approximately 63,450 people would live in the City of Santa Fe at that time.

Growth in the housing stock would grow along similar lines with the majority of the new housing being built outside the City limits.

**Table 24. Rental units, Santa Fe County.**

	1990	2000
Number of total occupied units	37,840	52,482
Number of rental-occupied units	12,219	16,497
Percent of total occupied housing units	32.2%	31.4%
Percent of vacancy rate	7.1%	5.6%
Median rent	\$425	\$690

(Source: Census Bureau 1990; Census Bureau 2000a)

**Table 25. Population projections, 2010.**

Area	2000 Population*	Percent Growth 1990-2000*	Projected Population 2010	Percent Growth 2000-2010
Santa Fe County	129,292	30.7	158,624	22.7
Central Region	105,272	28.4	128,518	22.1
Total Urban Area	80,056	19.5	89,734	12.1
City of Santa Fe	62,203	11.4	63,450	2.0
Las Campanas	800	--	2,400	

(Source: \*Census Bureau 2000a; UNM 2002)

**Table 26. Housing projections, 2010.**

Area	2000 Housing Units*	Projected New Units 2010	Projected Total Housing Units
Santa Fe County	57,701	6,650**	64,351
City of Santa Fe	30,533	4,000**	34,533
Las Campanas	400	700***	1,700 (2015)***

(Source: \*Census Bureau 2000a; \*\*UNM 2002; \*\*\*CH2M Hill 2001)

## Ways of Life

Founded in 1607, Santa Fe is the second oldest city in the United States and is the oldest capital city in America. Tourists coming to Santa Fe for its art galleries and museums, fine restaurants, and cultural attractions such as the renowned Santa Fe Opera are also interested in the possibility of visiting nearby Indian pueblos such as Tesuque and traditional Hispanic villages such as La Cienega.

Historically, this part of northern New Mexico is characterized by the rural and agricultural nature, Indian and Hispano populations, and pockets of persistent poverty (Jemez y Sangre 2002). The current tricultural mix of Anglo, Hispanic, and Indian populations represents a unique culture in the world. Land based Indian and Hispano cultures continue the centuries-old traditions that included distinctive land use and settlement patterns, agricultural and irrigation practices, natural resource stewardship practices, social relations, religious activities, and architecture. Many of

these traditions and practices are being lost because these same tourists are now settling in the area, changing the demographic and income structure of the communities.

Residents of northern New Mexico have a special relationship with water, characterized by a popular bumper sticker, “Agua es vida.” Traditional acequias still run through the City during the summer, and there are irrigation ditch associations all over the County. Santa Fe residents, customers of Sangre de Cristo Water, have been under mandatory Stage 3 Water Shortage Emergency Use restrictions since April 2002. Under the Stage 3 restriction, vehicle washing is restricted to once a month and outdoor watering is restricted to once a week with no planting of new grass seed or sod allowed. The use of ornamental fountains is prohibited. Tourist services are also restricted: linens may not be changed more than once every 4 days for guests staying more than 1 night, and restaurants may serve water only upon request. Drought emergency surcharges and water use violation fees are in effect for both residential and commercial customers.

The Santa Fe City Council passed an Annual Water Budget Ordinance in late 2002, which requires all permit applications for construction of new homes or businesses to be accompanied by payment for retrofitting a sufficient number of water conserving fixtures in other existing residences or businesses to fully offset the anticipated increase in water use. Alternately, applicants may directly install these fixtures.

Santa Fe County Commissioners adopted a voluntary water conservation plan in July 2000 and water use restrictions in August 2000, that authorize the County water utility to impose the same level of restrictions and penalties on its customers as those in force in the City. The County water utility is directly connected to the City’s water supply and system and directly impacted by any water shortages the City may experience. Commissioners recently adopted an ordinance that includes significant landscaping restrictions directed toward water conservation and is developing a comprehensive mandatory conservation program for the entire County.

The Las Campanas Master Design Guidelines contain a policy designed to conserve water consumption. Estates 1 and 2 of the development are on City water; in other sections, water use is restricted to 0.25 acre-feet per year for lots with one home and to 0.5 acre-feet per year for lots with a home and a guesthouse. Lot owners who install swimming pools are required to obtain additional water rights. The design guidelines require the use of water-saving fixtures and limit landscaping to drought tolerant indigenous plant materials. The golf courses are primarily irrigated with recycled gray water.

### **Community Services**

The City provides a full range of community services to its residents, including municipal utilities such as water and waste water services and garbage pickup and landfilling. In addition, community services such as fire, police, and emergency services are provided, as well as recreational and educational opportunities. The County provides community services such as fire, police, and emergency services. It provides water and wastewater services for some areas. Solid waste pickup is available from private hauling companies and most County residents use septic tanks and leach fields for liquid waste disposal. Roads are maintained by County crews.

Most of the land surrounding the project area is vacant and owned by either the FS or BLM. A number of subdivision and planned developments are located along Camino la Tierra, which becomes Buckman Road at the northwest corner of Las Campanas. Electrical power is provided by above ground lines and buried cables. Telephone lines are extended as development occurs.

There are few community services in the project area. With the exception of City water at some of the close-in subdivisions, residences rely on wells. Solid waste pickup is available from private hauling companies. Most of the communities use septic tanks and leach fields for liquid waste disposal (SNAC 1999). There are no schools or developed recreation areas. Several of the planned developments have community centers for their residents with meeting rooms, swimming pools, tennis courts, and spas. Las Campanas has two private 18-hole golf courses. Emergency medical and fire services are provided by County and volunteer department personnel. Police protection is provided by private security forces, the County Sheriff's Office, Federal law enforcement personnel, and the New Mexico State Police.

### **Revenue Base**

During the 1990s, the taxable gross receipts for the County increased 93 percent for a compound annual rate of 6.8 percent. The City's gross receipts tax base grew by 80 percent or a compound rate of 6 percent. Given that employment grew more in the City than in the County, this appears to be unreasonable until the impact of a new law requiring gross receipts taxes on housing sales to be reported at the location of the house rather than the location of the real estate agent's office is factored into the equation. By 2000, the City's share of the County total had slipped below 80 percent and was just over 78 percent in 2001, a bad year for Santa Fe and other tourist destinations. While Santa Fe has maintained its share of total taxable gross receipts from retail trade and services, it accounts for only about half of the total taxable gross receipts from construction.

Total taxable gross receipts for the County in 2001 was \$3,101.5 million, dominated by retail trade (\$1,289.2 million) and services (\$869.9 million), both major components reflecting the importance of the tourist industry.

### **Employment/Unemployment**

Employment in the County has grown by almost 30 percent over the past 10 years, similar to the population growth rate. Unlike population growth, which grew faster in the County, job growth continues to be concentrated in the City. As shown in Table 27, the top employment sectors are the services industry (30 percent), government (28 percent), and retail trade (14 percent). Combining the individual components in another way, employment related to tourism (including retail trade; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and accommodations and food service) is almost 30 percent. Construction employment accounted for almost 8 percent of total County employment in 2001.

The decreasing share of employees in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting category is an indication of change in the County; the category now reflects subsistence activities rather than full-time work. In the 1990 U.S. Census, 889 persons were employed in this category; the 2001 estimates gathered by the New Mexico Department of Labor list only 194 persons in this category, a 78 percent decrease. This decrease in employment is especially noticeable in the central region of the County where small farms and ranches are being developed into home sites. The majority of employment now seen in this category is on the few remaining large ranches in the eastern County area, south of Galisteo and north of Interstate 40.

**Table 27. Total employment and annual average wages, by industry, Santa Fe County, 2001.**

Industry	Total Employed	Average Annual Wages
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	194	\$23,816
Mining	161	\$40,664
Utilities	126	\$38,272
Construction	4,624	\$29,380
Manufacturing	1,402	\$26,052
<b>Basic Industry - Subtotal/Percentage of Total Wholesale Trade</b>	<b>6,507/11.1%</b>	
Wholesale trade	850	\$37,856
Retail trade	8,416	\$24,492
Transportation and warehousing	514	\$26,520
<b>Trade - Subtotal/Percentage of Total</b>	<b>9,780/16.6%</b>	
Information	969	\$37,960
Finance and insurance	1,530	\$43,888
Real estate, rental and leasing	1,081	\$29,900
<b>FIRE – Subtotal/Percentage of Total</b>	<b>3,580/6.1%</b>	
Professional and technical services	2,617	\$47,684
Management of companies and enterprises	207	\$29,536
Administrative and waste services	1,751	\$22,412
<b>Professional and Managerial - Subtotal/Percentage of Total</b>	<b>4,575/7.8%</b>	
Educational services	1,224	\$27,820
Health care and social services	5,198	\$33,540
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,197	\$24,544
Accommodations and food service	7,948	\$15,860
Other services, except public administration	2,274	\$23,972
<b>Services – Subtotal/Percentage of Total</b>	<b>17,841/30.4%</b>	
Federal government	1,389	\$44,980
State government	9,332	\$32,188
Local government	5,729	\$23,192
<b>Government – Subtotal/Percentage of Total</b>	<b>16,450/28.0%</b>	
Non-classifiables	32	\$33,488
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58,765/100%</b>	

Nonagricultural employment in the County has increased at a faster rate than both the State and the Nation since 1960. The BBER estimates that employment growth would decline from 4 percent to 2.2 percent during the next 8 years. Growth would primarily occur in the retail trade and services sectors, reflecting the continuing importance of tourism to the City's economic structure (UNM 2002). In 2001, the unemployment rate for the County was 2.6 percent and 2.4 percent for the City.

### **Income**

Income statistics for the County reflect significantly higher median household and per capita incomes than for New Mexico residents as a whole. Median household for 1999, as presented in the 2000 U.S. Census, is \$42,207 for the County and \$34,133 for the State. Per capita income for County residents was reported at \$23,594 compared to \$17,261 for the State average (Census Bureau 2000a). UNM 2002 reports that wage and salary disbursements account for only 43 percent of the County's personal income in 1999, compared to 58 percent nationwide. Income in the County is supplemented by dividends, interest, and rent (27 percent) and owners income (10 percent). Even though the County per capita income is above the national average, the average wage in the County is only about 80 percent of the U.S. average (UNM 2002).

### **Economic Forecast**

If growth in the area was unconstrained, the BBER estimates that employment would grow at a compound annual rate of 2.2 percent, primarily in the retail trade and services sector maintaining the area's dependence on tourism into 2010 (UNM 2002). Employment growth would create a demand for over 3 million square feet within the City, while the gross receipts tax base, as estimated, would grow at a compound annual rate of 4.2 percent.

### **Environmental Consequences**

Under all alternatives, growth would be constrained because water is the limiting resource (UNM 2002). Water shortages would continue unless the climate changes and drought conditions lift.

### **No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, population and housing growth in the County would gradually decrease as fewer new housing units would be permitted and built. Subdivisions with already approved units would be more likely to be built, but fewer than 3,150 units would be able to obtain utility hookups during the 10-year planning period (UNM 2002), thereby reducing the amount of population growth and potentially increasing the per unit cost of both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units based on supply/demand dynamics (UNM 2002). Subdivided land would remain undeveloped and would remain vacant rather than reverting to a previous land use such as agricultural. Development of additional units at Las Campanas would be restricted. If the water shortage were to reach Stage 4 water restrictions, the BBER predicts that new building activity in the County could shut down (UNM 2002), although builders are not expected to abandon the area but rather wait until the water situation is resolved and housing development can resume.

Ways of life for local residents would be affected if Stage 4 and 5 water restrictions were imposed if severe drought conditions persist. These restrictions would severely curtail the traditional landscaping that accompanies the architecture in the historic district of the City. Tourism would gradually decrease, as the traditional landscape cannot be watered, although water shortages

would not affect the art and other historical attractions that draw visitors. Tourism may be indirectly affected because Stage 3 water restrictions limit amenities at restaurants and hotels. Those limitations would increase if Stage 4 or 5 restrictions became necessary.

The severely limited water scenario would have several direct effects on the Santa Fe economy. Constraints on commercial development would be experienced, but there is much commercial space currently vacant or underutilized that would accommodate any growth in this sector (UNM 2002). The effects of the water shortage would be felt in 2006 and beyond.

BBER estimated that slower growth due to water shortages would result in gross receipts tax revenues averaging 3.45 percent for 2003 through 2010, compared to the City's compound annual average of 6 percent during the 1990s. Because community services and facilities are operated using these gross receipts tax revenues, services would have to be curtailed (UNM 2002). BBER explored the relationship between gross receipts taxes and housing development and reports that many municipalities are in a sense addicted to growth because up to 70 percent of their general fund revenues are from gross receipts taxes on housing construction (UNM 2002). As housing starts decrease, so do gross receipts tax revenues.

Retail and services employment would also be affected as opportunities for new businesses decrease. The construction sector—currently at almost 8 percent of the total labor market—would be directly impacted if new residential and commercial building activity is restricted by water shortages. The BBER estimates that building construction employment would fall by roughly 10 percent by 2005, possibly affecting up to 500 workers in the area (UNM 2002) or almost 1 percent of the existing labor force. Under the No Action Alternative, no project construction, operation, and maintenance jobs would be created to offset the lost jobs.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

Under the Proposed Action, which includes the delivery of 8,730 acre-feet of water per year through the diversion, growth would be moderately to tightly limited because of water availability. The BBER estimates that housing unit building permits would be restricted to between 5,656 (moderate limits) to 3,132 (tight limits) during the 10-year planning period (UNM 2002), well short of the estimated 9,143 units predicted for the central region of the County under an unconstrained, no water shortage scenario. Again, using the concept of supply and demand, as the number of houses constructed is decreased, the cost of each dwelling unit would increase. Although development of additional units at Las Campanas would be restricted up to 2006, full build-out would be achieved by 2015 as planned (CH2M Hill 2001).

This amount of water to be delivered via the diversion is not sufficient to ease all of the water demand pressures in the region, so the effects to ways of life, tourism, and commercial development would be similar to the No Action Alternative although the imposition of Stage 3 water restrictions during peak demand periods would be shorter or potentially avoided altogether. Stage 4 and 5 water restrictions would be avoided for the near-term foreseeable future.

BBER estimated that the slower growth due to less water availability would result in gross receipts tax revenues averaging 4.2 percent per year for 2003 through 2010, compared to the City's compound average of 6 percent during the 1990s. The BBER predicts that the construction sector of the labor force would initially feel the same range of effects as under the No Action Alternative even though more houses would be permitted (UNM 2002). As housing starts



decrease, so do gross receipts tax revenues. Local governments would continue to be financially stressed to provide the current range of community services.

**Construction Effects.** Construction of the diversion project would employ 220 workers during the peak construction phase, effectively offsetting almost 50 percent of the construction workers laid off from other building. Table 1 lists the construction schedule and workforce requirements for the Proposed Action. Construction of the Proposed Action is scheduled to take 24 months with an average employment of 25 workers. As shown in Table 27, wages for construction workers in the County averaged \$29,380 per year in 2001 (UNM 2002). The Proposed Action would generate a minimum of \$1,469,000 in wages. Peak employment is expected to reach 220 workers for the project as a whole and to last 18 months placing the upper range of wages income at \$9,792,000. The total project cost is estimated at approximately \$60 million; in addition to wages, construction materials and supplies would be purchased from local suppliers out of that total. Dollars that come into a community from new wages also help create other new jobs because of the purchase of personal items such as food, gas, housing, utilities, medical services, and other items. This is called the multiplier effect, and because the direct dollars come from local sources, the multiplier is 1. For every dollar paid in wages, another dollar would be generated from other businesses. The 2-year economic benefit from construction of the Proposed Action is between \$2,938,000 and \$19,584,000 to the local economy.

**Operation Effects.** Operation and maintenance of the facilities would be done by Sangre de Cristo crews and would require approximately 16 new employees depending on the operations and maintenance schedules required. Salaries for operations and maintenance workers range between \$9.47 and \$16.39/hour. Assuming an equal number of entry level and skilled workers, an average wage would be \$12.93/hour or \$26,894 per year. Operation and maintenance of the facilities would generate an additional \$430,304 each year after construction is complete. With the 1:1 multiplier, another \$430,304 would be contributed to the local economy each year.

#### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

Effects to all aspects of the social and economic environments, under any of the alternatives' construction or operation, are expected to be the same as for the Proposed Action.

#### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

Effects to all aspects of the social and economic environments, under any of the alternatives' construction or operation, are expected to be the same as for the Proposed Action.

#### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

**Construction and Operation Effects.** Alternative AGP1 effects would be similar to the Proposed Action for the power upgrade.

#### **Cumulative Effects**

The ability to sustain growth is influenced by many factors (UNM 2002). Assured water availability is arguably the most influential factor governing growth in the County region. Present and reasonably foreseeable activities that affect growth in the region are all overshadowed by the availability of water. The Buckman Supplemental Wells Project provides a source of water to the City and County, but short-term supply would be seriously impacted if the San Juan-Chama Project water is not available.

No specific cumulative effects to ways of life are expected if the Proposed Action or any of the action alternatives are selected.

Both the City and County would notice a decrease in the revenue base within several years if the Proposed Action is not selected because of the decrease in new housing starts, which directly affects the gross receipts tax revenues (UNM 2002). Property tax revenues would not decrease since the average price of a home would increase as demand outstrips supply (UNM 2002).

The Proposed Action and action alternatives, in conjunction with the Buckman Supplemental Wells Project, would alleviate some of the service industry and construction job layoffs for several years. In addition, both projects would add temporary jobs during the construction phase and permanent jobs during the operation and maintenance phase.

No specific cumulative effects to income are expected if the Proposed Action or any of the action alternatives are selected.

## **Environmental Justice**

### **Affected Environment**

U.S. Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations) directs Federal agencies to assess whether the Proposed Action or alternatives would have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. Identification of environmental issues can be accomplished through public involvement and the scoping process.

The formal scoping period for this project ran from July 22 through September 5, 2002. The FS and BLM invited interested parties, the public, tribal governments, and governmental agencies to comment on the Proposed Action and those issues and alternatives which should be considered. Chapter 1 contains more detailed information on the scoping process and comments.

For the purpose of this assessment, minority refers to people who classified themselves in the 2000 U.S. Census as African Americans, Asian or Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Hispanics of any race or origin, or other non-White races. A minority population refers to an area where minority individuals comprise 25 percent or more of the population. In the County of Santa Fe, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin account for 49 percent of the population, and American Indian/Alaska Natives account for 3 percent of the population. White persons, not of Hispanic or Latino origin, accounted for 46 percent of the total County population in 2000 (Census Bureau 2002).

Low-income population refers to a community in which 25 percent or more of the population is characterized as living in poverty, as determined by statistical poverty thresholds used by the United States. In 2000, the poverty weighted average threshold for a family of four was \$7,603, and \$8,794 for an unrelated individual (Census Bureau, 2000b). In the County of Santa Fe, 11.9 percent of the population is below the poverty threshold (Census Bureau 2002).

Field investigations of the project area indicate that the proposed water diversion site and the Buckman/Dead Dog Leg corridors are located primarily within FS and BLM rangelands that do not contain residential communities. Reservation lands of the Pueblo of San Ildefonso are directly

across the Rio Grande from the proposed water diversion site. These tribal lands are not residential but support the cultural practices of the pueblo.

### **Environmental Consequences**

During the EIS process, public input from persons or groups was considered regardless of their demographic or socioeconomic characteristics. Based on public comment and the EIS analysis, the FS and BLM determined that the issues associated with environmental justice would not be affected by the Proposed Action or any of the action alternatives.

### **No Action Alternative**

If the No Action Alternative is selected, water availability may be severely limited, potentially leading to an increase in housing costs, both purchase and rental, as construction of new homes declines but demand stays the same or increases slightly (UNM 2002). It is impossible to predict the price point at which local workers would no longer be able to afford housing or when employment opportunities would be lost. The majority of workers in the service industry are in the lower income brackets and many would be faced with the predicament of not being able to afford housing in the region. Many low-income residents would leave the area in order to find affordable housing. State government workers would be affected as well because their incomes would not cover the cost of housing if large price increases accompany a decreasing supply. In addition, construction and service industry jobs may be lost because of the lack of development and decrease in tourism.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action**

**Construction Effects.** Construction jobs would be created during the construction of the project that may alleviate some job losses that may have occurred from slowdowns in home building or industries during recent droughts.

**Operation Effects.** The effects to environmental justice would be similar to the No Action Alternative for the operational phase. There are no communities or housing within the construction area and no minority or low-income populations. Direct effects to minority or low-income groups are difficult to identify as exclusively affecting these groups. Even though Native Americans constitute a minority population in the County of Santa Fe, the population is dispersed throughout the County. The water that would be available because of the diversion would be available equally to all residents with municipal or County hookups. The FS initiated ongoing consultations with the following tribes: Pueblo of Jemez, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Laguna, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of San Juan, Pueblo of San Ildefonso, Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Pueblo of Isleta, Pueblo of Taos, Pueblo of Picuris, Pueblo of Sandia, Pueblo of Tesuque, Pueblo of Nambe, Pueblo of Zia, Pueblo of Pojoaque, and the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

Las Campanas, a community that is generally wealthier than residents of the surrounding area, is a special use permit applicant that would pay for the water and share the cost for constructing the diversion project. However, the purchase and delivery of water to a nonminority, non-low-income group would not have a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Sediment Facility Alternatives**

No specific effects to environmental justice are expected during the construction or operation phases of any of the facility alternatives.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Pipeline Route Alternatives**

No specific effects to environmental justice are expected during the construction or operation phases of any of the pipeline alternatives.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Power Upgrade Alternative**

No specific effects to environmental justice are expected during the construction or operation phases of the power upgrade alternative.

### **Cumulative Effects**

No specific environmental justice cumulative effects are expected because of the Proposed Action or any of the alternatives.

### **Unavoidable Adverse Effects**

Unavoidable adverse effects are environmental consequences of an action that cannot be avoided either by changing the nature of the action or through mitigation if the action is undertaken. With implementation of the Buckman Project, unavoidable adverse effects would occur mainly on surface water resources, plant communities, animal habitat, and cultural resources. Diversion of water from the Rio Grande would unavoidably reduce the water available to downstream users for consumptive purposes. Although existing agreements allow withdrawal of water by various entities along the river, the physical reduction in the availability of water downstream from the intake structure would still be considered unavoidably adverse. Plant communities would be affected by construction activities that could result in the modification or clearing of approximately 306 acres. Fifty-nine acres would be permanently lost due to construction of facilities and associated infrastructure. Similarly, the same amount of wildlife habitat would be affected. While effects to cultural resources can be mitigated through data recovery efforts, the effect is still adverse since the resources are removed from the landscape.

### **Irreversible and Irrecoverable Resource Commitments**

Irreversible commitments are those that cannot be reversed except in the extreme long term. Irrecoverable commitments of resources are expenditures or consumption of resources that cannot be reversed or restored. For the Proposed Action and alternatives, the effect to cultural resources is irrecoverable. The expenditure of nonrenewable resources such as sand and other components of concrete, iron, and other metals for pipes and pumps, petroleum for the operation of heavy equipment, and labor during construction and operations and maintenance, constitute an irrecoverable commitment of resources. The land proposed for permanent use (59 acres) constitutes an irreversible commitment of that resource.

### **Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity**

Approximately 306 acres would be affected by construction of the Buckman Project with a permanent loss of 59 acres to infrastructure. The proposed mitigation measures (see the section, “Pipeline Alternatives” in Chapter 2) would return most of the affected acreage to its original biological function within a time period of several years. Productivity of the 59 acres would be lost as long as the buildings and infrastructure remain. Operation of the Buckman Project would, however, result in the long-term recovery of the aquifer in the Santa Fe Basin. This recovery of

the aquifer would result in the restoration of the productivity of the aquifer, which would have a direct benefit both in the near term and to future generations.



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## Technical Reports

- The following seven technical reports and one addendum were prepared in support of this EIS.
- Biological Resources Technical Report for the Buckman Water Diversion Project. Tetra Tech, Inc. Santa Fe, NM. December 2004.
- Recreation/Scenery Resources Technical Report for the Buckman Water Diversion Project. Tetra Tech, Inc. Santa Fe, NM. December 2004.
- Social and Economic Resources Technical Report for the Buckman Water Diversion Project. Tetra Tech, Inc. Santa Fe, NM. December 2004.
- Water Resources Technical Report for the Buckman Water Diversion Project. Tetra Tech, Inc. Santa Fe, NM. December 2004.
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- Addendum A: Buckman Water Diversion Environmental Impact Statement Project: Cultural Resources Survey. SWCA Environmental Consultants. Albuquerque, NM. February 2005.
- Wase, Cheryl, Marie Brown, and Richard Wessel. Buckman Water Diversion Environmental Impact Statement Project: Cultural Resources Survey. Prepared for Tetra Tech, Inc. and Santa Fe National Forest. SWCA, Inc., Albuquerque, NM. February 2005.



# Appendix A: Response to Public Comments

## Introduction


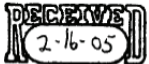

The public comment period for this draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) was initiated with publication of the Notice of Availability in the “Federal Register” on December 17, 2004. Two open house meetings were held on the afternoon and evening of January 26, 2005 to allow the public to meet with the applicants for the project and representatives of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. At these open house meetings, members of the public were invited to ask questions about the project and provide comments.

The public comment period ended on February 14, 2005. Comments were received from the 13 individuals, organizations, and agencies presented below. The comments received, along with responses, are provided on the following pages. Scanned images of the comment letters are provided in the order presented below with numerical codes for each comment annotated in the margins. Numerically coded responses, keyed to individual comments, are then provided for each comment letter in the “Comments Responses” section following all 13 comment letters.


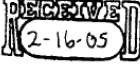
No.	First Name	Last Name	Position	Representing
1	Bonnie	Braganza	Acting Chief, Office of Planning and Coordination	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
2	Lisa	Kirkpatrick	Division Chief, Conservation Services Division	State of New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish
3	Rolf	Schmidt-Petersen	Chief, Rio Grande Basin Bureau	New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
4	Jessica	Aberly, Esq		Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque
5	Joni	Arends		Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety
6	John	Buchser	Chair, Northern Group	Sierra Club, Rio Grande Chapter
7	Alonzo	Gallegos		Caja del Rio La Majada Livestock Association
8	Brian	Shields		Amigos Bravos
9	Joe	Auburg	Private Citizen	Individual
10	Jack	Carpenter	Private Citizen	Individual
11	Alan	Jager	Private Citizen	Individual
12	David	Quintana	Private Citizen	Individual
13	Ted	Williams	Private Citizen	Individual

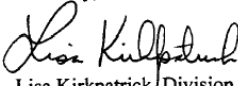
## Written Comments

### 1. Bonnie Braganza, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6

	<u>Comment Code</u>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY</b> REGION 6 1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200 DALLAS, TX 75202-2733</p> <p style="text-align: center;">February 11, 2005</p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p> <p>Mr. Sanford Hurlocker USDA Forest Service Santa Fe National Forest Española Ranger District 1710 N. Riverside Drive P.O. Box 3307 Española, NM 87533</p> <p>Dear Mr. Hurlocker:</p> <p>In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for Implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas, has completed its review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Buckman Water Diversion Project. This project will provide for a needed sustainable means of accessing water supplies for the City of Santa Fe in Santa Fe County, and Las Campana Limited Partnership. The proposed action would include a diversion structure at the Rio Grande; water transmission facilities including pumps and booster station buildings, water tanks, settling ponds and pipes; water treatment facilities, and electric power improvements.</p> <p>The DEIS evaluates and identifies the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action and Alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative. The DEIS concludes that the proposed action would not have any adverse impacts on the environment.</p> <p>EPA classified your DEIS and proposed action as "LO," i.e., EPA has "Lack of Objections" to the proposed alternative. Our classification will be published in the <u>Federal Register</u> according to our responsibility under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, to inform the public of our views on proposed Federal actions. } 1-1</p> <p>EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the DEIS. We request that you send our office one (1) copy of the Final EIS at the same time that it is sent to the Office of Federal Activities (2251A), EPA, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20044. } 1-2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sincerely yours,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Bonnie Braganza, Acting Chief Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Internet Address (URL) - <a href="http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/">http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/</a> Recycled/Recyclable - Printed with Vegetable Oil Based Inks on Recycled Paper (Minimum 30% Postconsumer)</small></p>	

2. Lisa Kirkpatrick, State of New Mexico Department of Game & Fish

<p>GOVERNOR Bill Richardson</p>  <p>DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION Bruce C. Thompson</p>	<div style="text-align: right; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p style="font-size: small;">past mark 2-16-2005 09</p> </div> <p><b>STATE OF NEW MEXICO</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF GAME &amp; FISH</b></p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">One Wildlife Way Post Office Box 25112 Santa Fe, NM 87504 Phone: (505) 476-8008 Fax: (505) 476-8124</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Visit our website at <a href="http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us">www.wildlife.state.nm.us</a> For basic information or to order free publications: 1-800-862-9310.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Comment</u> <u>Code</u></p> <p><b>STATE GAME COMMISSION</b> Guy Riordan, Chairman Albuquerque, NM</p> <p>Alfredo Montoya, Vice-Chairman Alcalde, NM</p> <p>David Henderson Santa Fe, NM</p> <p>M. H. "Dutch" Salmon Silver City, NM</p> <p>Peter Pino Zia Pueblo, NM</p> <p>Dr. Tom Arvas Albuquerque, NM</p> <p>Leo Sims Hobbs, NM</p>
<p>February 9, 2005</p> <p>Mr. Sandy Hurlocker (Buckman Diversion Comments) Espanola Ranger District P.O. Box 3307 Espanola, New Mexico 87533</p> <p>Re: Draft EIS for the Buckman Water Diversion Project NMGF No. 9796</p> <p>Dear Mr. Hurlocker:</p> <p>In response to the Federal Register Notice dated December 17, 2004, regarding the availability of the DEIS for the above referenced project, the Department of Game and Fish (Department) would like to indicate our support for mitigation measures and monitoring requirements identified in Chapter 2. The Department urges you to require the power line construction practices identified on page 65, rather than just recommending them. To reiterate their importance, the Department is providing the following recommendations for powerline construction and trenching construction to minimize or eliminate impacts to wildlife.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">1997, Updated 2003 Powerline Project Guidelines; 2003 Trenching Guidelines</p> <p>Major emphases of these guidelines include 1) designing transmission lines to prevent or minimize risk of electrocution of raptors (<i>Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996</i> Edison Electric Institute/Raptor Research Foundation, Washington, D.C.); and 2) avoiding leaving open trenches during below-ground powerline construction to minimize injury or death to wildlife. A copy of the <i>Suggested Practices</i> report may be purchased from Edison Electric Institute at <a href="http://www.eei.org/products_and_services/descriptions_and_access/suggested_pract.htm">http://www.eei.org/products_and_services/descriptions_and_access/suggested_pract.htm</a>.</p> <p>Open trenches and ditches can trap small mammals, amphibians and reptiles and can cause injury to large mammals. Periods of highest activity for many of these species include night time, summer months and wet weather.</p>		
		<p style="margin-left: 10px;">} 2-1</p> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">} 2-2</p> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">} 2-3</p>

<p><i>Sandy Hurlocker</i></p>	<p><i>February 9, 2005</i></p>	<p>Page -2-</p>	<p><b><u>Comment Code</u></b></p>
<p><u>To minimize the amount of open trenches</u> at any given time, keep trenching and back-filling crews close together.</p> <p><u>Trench during the cooler months</u> (October – March). However, there may be exceptions (e.g., critical wintering areas) which need to be assessed on a site-specific basis; although we do not believe this to be the case with this project.</p> <p><u>Avoid leaving trenches open overnight</u>. Where trenches cannot be back-filled immediately, escape ramps should be constructed at least every 90 meters. Escape ramps can be short lateral trenches sloping to the surface or wooden planks extending to the surface. The slope should be less than 45 degrees (100%). Trenches that have been left open overnight, especially where endangered species occur, should be inspected and animals removed prior to back-filling.</p>			<p>} 2-3 } Cont.</p>
<p>We support the control or eradication of salt cedar and Russian olive from the banks of the Rio Grande at the water diversion site. The Department would like you to consider extending the area of control/eradication upstream and downstream, if feasible, to increase the likelihood of removal and replacement with native species at the diversion site. The additional control could serve as mitigation for construction impacts.</p>			<p>} 2-4 } 2-5 } 2-6</p>
<p>With implementation of these recommendations during construction, the Department believes that this project as proposed is unlikely to adversely affect wildlife or wildlife habitats. Other sources of information are:</p>			<p>} 2-7</p>
<p>1. <b>Habitat Handbook Project Guidelines:</b>  <a href="http://wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/habitat_handbook/index.htm">http://wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/habitat_handbook/index.htm</a></p>			
<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on your project. If you have any questions please contact Randy Floyd at (505) 476-8091 or <a href="mailto:rfloyd@state.nm.us">rfloyd@state.nm.us</a>.</p>			
<p>Sincerely,</p> <div style="text-align: center;">               Lisa Kirkpatrick, Division Chief              Conservation Services Division         </div>			
<p>LK/rif</p>			
<p>Encl. (2)</p>			
<p>xc Susan MacMullin, Ecological Services Field Supervisor, USFWS              Brian Gleadle, NW Area Operations Chief, NMGF              Steve Anderson, NW Habitat Specialist, NMDGF</p>			

## TRENCHING GUIDELINES

### NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH

September 2003

Open trenches and ditches can trap small mammals, amphibians and reptiles and can cause injury to large mammals. Periods of highest activity for many of these species include nighttime, summer months and wet weather. Implementing the following recommendations can minimize loss of wildlife.

Keep trenching and back-filling crews close together, to minimize the amount of open trenches at any given time.

Trench during the cooler months (October – March). However, there may be exceptions (e.g., critical wintering areas) that need to be assessed on a site-specific basis.

Avoid leaving trenches open overnight. Where trenches cannot be back-filled immediately, escape ramps should be constructed at least every 90 meters. Escape ramps can be short lateral trenches or wooden planks sloping to the surface. The slope should be less than 45 degrees (1:1). Trenches that have been left open overnight should be inspected and animals removed prior to backfilling, especially where endangered species occur.

On a statewide basis there are numerous threatened, endangered or sensitive species potentially at risk by trenching operations. Project initiators should seek county species list to evaluate potential impact of projects. Risk to these species depends upon a wide variety of conditions at the trenching site, such as trench depth, side slope, soil characteristics, season, and precipitation events.

**POWERLINE PROJECT GUIDELINES**

**NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH**

January 1997, Updated 2003

TRANSMISSION LINE STRUCTURAL DESIGN All hawks, owls and vultures are protected under New Mexico state law (New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1978, 17-2-14, as amended). Bald and golden eagles are protected under federal law. Transmission lines must be designed to prevent or minimize risk of electrocution of raptors. A variety of alternatives were set forth in Olendorff et al. 1981 in *Suggested Practice for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1981* (Raptor Research Report No.4, Raptor Research Foundation, Inc., St. Paul, Minnesota, 111 pages). This report was updated by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee in 1996 as *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996* (Edison Electric Institute/Raptor Research Foundation, Washington, D.C.). A Copy of this report may be purchased from Edison Electric Institute at [http://www.eei.org/products\\_and\\_services/descriptions\\_and\\_access/suggested\\_pract.htm](http://www.eei.org/products_and_services/descriptions_and_access/suggested_pract.htm)

- 2) LOCATION Existing roads, trails, and rights-of-way should be followed where possible. Roads and rights-of-way should avoid critical wildlife habitat, saddles, ridge tops, riparian, meadows and edges of meadows, and big game migration routes. Construction using helicopters should be considered in remote critical wildlife areas where construction of new roads would otherwise be necessary.
- 3) CLEARING Rights-of-way clearing should be selective, leaving shrubs and brush undisturbed where possible. Clearing should be avoided in riparian areas and on steep slopes. Brush and limbs should be piled at intervals to enhance wildlife habitat.
- 4) STRUCTURES Bridges and culverts should be designed such that fish passage is not impeded, and hydrology and stream course should remain unchanged. Special techniques and structures should be employed as necessary to minimize erosion and sedimentation to riparian areas (e.g., catch basins, raised culverts for roads runoff, water bars).
- 5) CLOSURES Roads and rights-of-way which provide access to critical wildlife area should be designed for easy and effective closure. Gates should be installed at onset of construction and closed immediately after completion of the project. Temporary roads should be obliterated and revegetated immediately after construction.

- 6) SCHEDULING Winter construction is preferred on critical big game summer range. Summer construction is preferred on big game winter range. No construction should be conducted in winter range from December 15-April 15. No construction should occur in elk calving areas from May 1-June 30. No construction should occur in deer fawning areas from June 1-August 31 (northern New Mexico) or July 1-September 31 (southern New Mexico). No construction should occur in turkey nesting areas from April 15-June 30. Construction in big game migration areas should be restricted during migration.
- 7) SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FEATURES (Areas such as seeps, springs, wet meadows, marshes, wallows, salt licks and water development areas). Protect these features from damage during construction. No roads within 200' of feature. Remove debris from wildlife trails. Protect rock talus areas from disturbance by heavy equipment.
- 8) RIPARIAN AREAS AND FISHERIES Develop site specific measures where appropriate. Maintain at least 100' buffer along streams. Debris left in streams and drainages may be detrimental or beneficial and should be assessed on a site specific basis. Prevent siltation to streams. Fine sediment (less than 0.85 mm diameter) should remain at < 20% of spawning gravel in trout streams. In streams: maintain  $\geq$  80% natural shade over water; maintain  $\geq$  80% natural bank protection; composition of sand, silt, and clay should remain within 20% of natural levels.
- 9) FENCES Provide jumps or top rails on fences, or lay-down fences, within areas of high wildlife use (e.g., travel corridors). Bottom wire should be barbless and at least 18" above ground in antelope or deer habitat. Maximum fence height should be 42". Minimum spacing between top two wires should be 10". Do not use woven wire fencing
- 10) REVEGETATION AND RESTORATION Revegetation should utilize native grasses, forbs, and shrubs beneficial to wildlife. Incremental revegetation is preferred in areas where work is conducted during spring and summer. Sections of right-of-way should be rehabilitated as construction is completed. Revegetated areas which have not become established by the end of the growing season should be treated to prevent erosion and site degradation (e.g., mulching, contouring, water bars).

### SPECIES-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES Determine which state and/or federally listed species could occur in the project area. Sources of information include:

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
PO Box 25112  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504  
(505) 476-8101 [State-listed wildlife]

New Mexico Department of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources  
Forestry Division  
1220 St. Francis Dr.  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
(505) 476-3200 [State-listed plants]

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
New Mexico Ecological Services State Office  
2105 Osuna, NE  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113  
(505) 346-2525 [Federally-listed plants and animals]

Contact the above agencies for assistance in determining presence or absence of threatened and endangered species and development of protective measures.

- 2) DEER AND ELK Protect browse and forage plants.
- 3) TURKEY Identify and protect roost tree groups (winter roost trees are most critical). Roost tree groups can be described as:
  - Large open topped trees ( $\geq 13''$  dbh,  $> 40'$  tall, especially ponderosa pine)
  - Canopy cover  $> 55\%$ ;
  - Basal area  $> 100$  ft<sup>2</sup>/ac.
  - Accessible from clearing directly up slope, not isolated from stand.
  - Provide nesting habitat in ponderosa pine or mixed conifer where practical by creating slash piles (10' diameter x 3' high) or leaving unlopped tree tops.
  - Nesting habitat should be within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of dependable water.
- 4) RAPTORS Protect known nest tree groups. Protect perch and roost trees adjacent to cliffs, major ridges and openings.
- 5) BEAR Protect mast (oak & juniper) and forage plants. Leave large diameter dead or down trees for insect forage.




- 6) TREE SQUIRRELS Protect stands with high squirrel activity (e.g., nest trees, large middens). Protect trees with existing cavities.
- 7) NON-GAME BIRDS When abandoning or realigning old electric lines, leave 10% to 30% of the abandoned poles standing for perching and cavity nesting birds, especially in areas lacking natural snags. Numbers and location of poles to be left standing should be coordinated with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. The taller the poles the better, but under existing lines, leaving four to ten feet of the old pole standing will provide useful habitat. If poles are still sound, artificial nesting cavities can be created. Heavily creosoted, potentially toxic poles should be cut at ground level and removed.

### 3. Rolf Schmidt-Petersen, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

**NEW MEXICO INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS**

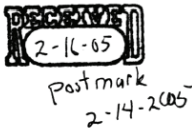
JIM DUNLAP, Chairman, Farmington  
J. PHELPS WHITE, III, Vice-Chairman, Roswell  
JOHN R. D'ANTONIO, JR., P.E., Secretary, Santa Fe  
BUFORD HARRIS, Mesilla  
BLANE SANCHEZ, Bosque Farms  
JULIA DAVIS STAFFORD, Cimarron  
PATRICIO GARCIA, Rio Chama  
JUDITH M. ESPINOSA, Albuquerque  
JAMES WILCOX, Carlsbad



BATAAN MEMORIAL BUILDING, ROOM 101  
STATE CAPITOL  
POST OFFICE BOX 25102  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87504-5102

(505)827-6160  
FAX:(505)827-6188

February 14, 2005



Mr. Sandy Hurlocker  
Buckman Diversion Comments  
Espanola Ranger District  
P.O. Box 3307  
Espanola, NM 87533

**Via Facsimile and Regular Mail**

**Re: New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project**

Dear Mr. Hurlocker:

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) submits the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project (DEIS) prepared by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the City of Santa Fe and the County of Santa Fe.

The San Juan-Chama Project was authorized by Congress in 1962 as a participating project of the Colorado River Storage Project for the primary purposes of providing water supply for irrigation, domestic, and municipal and industrial uses and incidental recreation and fish and wildlife benefits within the Rio Grande basin in New Mexico. The firm yield of the Project (96,200 acre-feet) is a portion of the State of New Mexico's water apportionment under the Upper Colorado River Compact. As such, the waters supplied by the San Juan-Chama Project are public waters of the State of New Mexico, the use of which is subject to all applicable state laws.

The ISC is charged by New Mexico law with investigation, protection, conservation and development of New Mexico's water resources, both interstate and intrastate. In the Rio Grande basin, the ISC performs numerous activities, some of which may be affected to by the proposed project. Those activities include, but are not limited to, overseeing water operations of the Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, conducting annual accounting of native Rio Grande water and San Juan Chama Project water, assessing and determining Rio Grande Compact compliance, addressing federal natural resource policy

Mr. Sandy Hurlocker  
 February 14, 2004  
 Page 2

**Comment**  
**Code**

issues that may impact the river system; and coordinating with the Office of the State Engineer (OSE), the individual San Juan-Chama Project contractors, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on the OSE/ISC groundwater pumping offset program. We reviewed the DEIS with the above activities in mind.

The ISC strongly supports the implementation of the Buckman Water Diversion Project for development and utilization by the City and County of Santa Fe of their annual allocation of 5,605 acre-feet of San Juan-Chama Project water in accordance with the Project's authorizing legislation. Full consumption by the Buckman Water Diversion Project applicants of their respective annual San Juan-Chama Project allocation or lease(s) will allow the applicants to conjunctively manage the water resources available to them and thereby decrease their current reliance on unsustainable groundwater use.

The description in the DEIS of the impacts of the project on the water resources and hydrology of the region is not sufficient for the ISC to ascertain potential impacts on its activities. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) should provide additional description of the project's planned water operations and resulting effects on the associated water resources. While we assume that these issues will be described and finalized through the application to the OSE for the project's Permit to Divert Surface Waters, we request that the FEIS include the following:

- 1) a proposed plan for reservoir/river operations which details how releases of the applicants San Juan-Chama Project water from reservoirs on the Rio Chama will be coordinated with diversion plant operations; } 3-1
- 2) a proposed method for tracking and accounting project diversions amongst the project water users including the types and locations of meters proposed to be used; and } 3-2
- 3) a discussion of the amount of San Juan Chama Project Water the City and County of Santa Fe would need to have in storage, or the amount of offsetting water rights that would need to be acquired and transferred, upon initiation of the Buckman diversion project to fully supply both the City and County portion of the project while fully offsetting the past and future impacts of groundwater pumping from the Buckman wellfield. } 3-3

Specific comments:

Executive Summary, Page 1: The second paragraph of the Purpose and Needs section states that ground water levels near the Buckman Well Field have undergone substantial declines. This statement is not technically correct. The Buckman wells are completed at depth in the Tesuque formation in a confined aquifer with strong upward vertical gradients. It is our understanding the hydraulic heads (the potentiometric surface) within the confined aquifer have declined substantially rather than the ground water levels. } 3-4

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<p>Mr. Sandy Hurlocker February 14, 2004 Page 3</p>	
<p>Chapter 2, page 50: How will the project be operated and river diversions and returns accounted so as not to cause impairment of a downstream water user or the Rio Grande Compact?</p>	} 3-5
<p>Chapter 2, page 50: Please describe the proposed water accounting methodology(s) (including time step) by water user.</p>	} 3-6
<p>Chapter 2, page 50: Please provide details on the projects measuring and gaging plan. In addition, how and where will the individual water user diversions be measured? What types of water measurement devices are planned, what are the planned levels of metering accuracy and precision, and where will the devices be located? On what time step (second, minute, hour, etc) are the diversions to be measured? Will the diversions and returns be accessible to the public via a website?</p>	} 3-7
<p>Chapter 2, page 51 The first paragraph of the page is unclear. Please clarify the intent.</p>	} 3-8
<p>Chapter 2, page 51: How will native Rio Grande flows be treated separately from San Juan-Chama Project waters during shortage periods on the Rio Grande? In addition, please describe the proposed plan for release of San Juan-Chama Project supplies from upstream storage for diversion at Buckman and the anticipated sources and plans for native Rio Grande water diversion.</p>	} 3-9
<p>Chapter 2, page 64: As mentioned earlier, a more detailed analysis of effects on water rights and plans for offsetting of past and future groundwater pumping of the Buckman Well Field should be provided.</p>	} 3-10
<p>Chapter 3, page 81: The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation did not build El Vado Dam and Reservoir in 1938 as part of the Middle Rio Grande Project. The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District built El Vado Dam and Reservoir in 1934 and 1935. The DEIS correctly notes this at page 89. The Middle Rio Grande Project was not authorized until 1950, with the passage of the Flood Control Acts of 1948 and 1950 (Public Laws 80-858 and 81-516, respectively.)</p>	} 3-11
<p>Chapter 3, page 81: The San Juan-Chama Project was authorized in 1962 by Public Law 84-485 as a participating project of the Colorado River Storage Project, not by the Boulder Canyon Project Act of 1928.</p>	} 3-12
<p>Chapter 3, page 89: The Colorado River Compact did not authorize storage capability for the San Juan River water. The Colorado River Compact provided for the equitable division and apportionment of the use of the waters of the Colorado River system. The Upper Colorado River Compact apportions to the Upper Basin states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming the exclusive beneficial use of the waters of the Upper Colorado River basin. The water diverted from the Colorado River basin into the Rio Grande Basin by the San Juan-</p>	} 3-13

	<b><u>Comment</u></b> <b><u>Code</u></b>
Mr. Sandy Hurlocker February 14, 2004 Page 4	
Chama Project is part of New Mexico's apportionment under the Upper Colorado River Compact.	} <b>3-13</b> Cont.
Chapter 3, page 90: The US Army Corps of Engineers operates Abiquiu Dam and Reservoir under the authorities of the Flood Control Acts of 1948 and 1950 and Public Law 86-645. Public Law 97-140 provided for the storage of up to 200,000 acre-feet of San Juan-Chama Project water in Abiquiu Reservoir.	} <b>3-14</b>
Chapter 3, page 91: Table 9 lists the State of New Mexico as the operator of Heron Reservoir. This is incorrect. The US Bureau of Reclamation operates Heron Reservoir.	} <b>3-15</b>
Chapter 3, page 107: The low average monthly flow of 212 cubic feet per second (cfs) recorded at Otowi gage for July 1963 was due to low upstream flow (mean daily discharge at Embudo for July 1963 ranged from 177 to 200 cfs) coupled with lack of normal irrigation storage and release operations at El Vado Reservoir due to the storage prohibition of Article VII of the Rio Grande Compact. Storage in Abiquiu Reservoir increased by only 340 acre-feet during the month of July 1963, equivalent to a continuous discharge of about 5.5 cfs.	} <b>3-16</b>
Chapter 3, page 107, third paragraph: Again, a more detailed analysis of effects on water rights and plans for offsetting of past and future groundwater pumping of the Buckman Well Field should be provided.	} <b>3-17</b>
Chapter 3, page 108: Paragraph 3 states that, at a flow of 1,000 cfs, the sand deposition downstream of the diversion would be about 0.16 inches with sand return and 0.11 inches without sand return. Over what time period is this deposition calculated to occur?	} <b>3-18</b>
Chapter 3, page 111: Surface elevations at Abiquiu Reservoir would change between one foot and as much as 8 feet, depending on the initial volume, by the addition or subtraction of 5,605 acre-feet of San Juan-Chama Project water.	} <b>3-19</b>
Chapter 3, page 112: The discussion of drawdown at the Buckman well field should be rewritten to clarify between drawdown in the water table elevation versus drawdown of the potentiometric surface associated with the confined Tesuque formation aquifer from which the well field produces. See the previous comment on this subject above.	} <b>3-20</b>
Chapter 3, page 115: Please address the effects of pumping from the Buckman wells on any domestic wells in the area. If there are no domestic wells in the area, please state this and list the distance to the closest domestic wells.	} <b>3-21</b>
Chapter 3, page 139: The discussion of cumulative effects on the Rio Grande silvery minnow references Las Campanas' 1,200 acre-feet per year of San Juan-Chama water. The FEIS should clarify that Las Campanas does not have a contract with the US Bureau of Reclamation for San Juan-Chama water, but instead has subleased that water from the City of Albuquerque.	} <b>3-22</b>

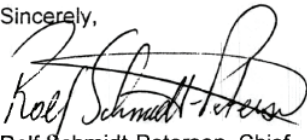
Comment  
Code

Mr. Sandy Hurlocker  
February 14, 2004  
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Chapter 3, page 140, Table 15: Please clarify the last 2 columns in the table. These percentages of "native water percent of diversion" cannot be calculated from the other numbers in the table. Please clarify in the text and in the table where these percentages come from and what they are meant to convey. } 3-23

Please contact Kevin Flanigan at (505) 764-3865 should you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

Sincerely,



Rolf Schmidt-Petersen, Chief  
Rio Grande Basin Bureau

Copy: Estevan R. López, P.E,  
Kevin Flanigan  
Rio Grande file  
Linda Tenorio

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## 4. Jessica Aberly, Esq., Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque

15:31 FAX 5052427845	Rothstein ABQ	002
		<u>Comment Code</u>
February 14, 2005		
<p><i>Via facsimile (505-753-9411), first-class mail, and e-mail (<a href="mailto:comments-southwestern-santafe-espanola@fs.fed.us">comments-southwestern-santafe-espanola@fs.fed.us</a>)</i> Sanford Hurlocker NEPA Coordinator United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service - Española Ranger District P.O. Box 3307 Española, NM 87533</p>		
<p><b>Re: Comments on the Buckman Water Diversion Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement from the Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque</b></p>		
Dear Mr. Hurlocker:		
<p>We submit the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") for the Buckman Water Diversion Project on behalf of the Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque (the "Pueblos").</p>		
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>		
<p>The proposed federal action that is the subject of the DEIS is to build a direct surface water diversion structure so that the City of Santa Fe ("City"), the County of Santa Fe ("County"), and the private subdivision of the Las Campanas Limited Partnership ("Las Campanas ") can, among other things, directly access San Juan-Chama Project water out of the river for their use. See DEIS at 1. In fact, the DEIS states that two-thirds of the water supply to be diverted from the project would be derived from San Juan-Chama Project water rights. <i>Id.</i> at 101. There are three federal agencies involved in this process: the Forest Service ("FS"), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture ("USDA"); the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM"), an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior ("DOI"); and the Bureau of Reclamation ("BOR"), also a DOI agency. <i>Id.</i> at 1.</p>		
<p>The DEIS analysis makes much of the fact that the City and County need to reduce their reliance on overtaxed groundwater supplies so as to lessen the resulting impacts from the Buckman wellfield groundwater pumping on the surface supplies of the Rio Grande and on the surface supplies of the Rio Pojoaque and Rio Tesuque in the Pojoaque River Basin. <i>E.g., id.</i> at 17. While we applaud the City's and County's recognition of the need to improve upon their past practices, we are deeply concerned about the federal agencies' lack of analysis regarding the impacts of not correcting what is a fundamentally flawed underlying assumption in the DEIS -- that the City and County have some sort of perpetual right to the full amount of the City's and County's current San Juan-Chama Project supply. This flawed underlying assumption has consequences both in terms of the federal agencies' ability to fulfill their fiduciary duties, as</p>		

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trustee, to the Pueblos and in terms of conducting a proper environmental impact statement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.* ("NEPA").

Through court-ordered settlement negotiations for the *Aamodt* (Pojoaque River Basin) adjudication, the Pueblos have worked cooperatively and productively with the City and County to try to find regional solutions that help the City and County meet their long-term goals while still respecting senior Pueblo rights and ensuring the Pueblos have the water they need for the future. As the DEIS notes, with the "no action" alternative, by virtue of existing permits from the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer for the Buckman wellfield, the City and County can only continue to use the Buckman wells to the extent that the current and future pumping effect from those wells on flows of the Rio Grande, the Rio Pojoaque, and the Rio Totsuque can continue to be offset. DEIS at 104 ("The net result of OSE's Buckman Well Field permit requirements is that there can be no depletions to streamflows from pumping of the Buckman wells that are not fully offset."). Those permit requirements provide an ultimate check on the system in the "no action" scenario and could ultimately limit growth in the City and County if offset water is not provided to protect the surface flows on the tributaries belonging to the Pueblos. While the Pueblos would prefer to promote conjunctive management practices by the City and County, whenever possible, the federal agencies, through this process and by virtue of action and inaction of the federal agencies in the *Aamodt* settlement process, have forced us to raise concerns in this setting. The Pueblos regret that, due to comment deadlines imposed by the federal agencies for this NEPA process, these comments must be filed now while we continue to try, together with the City and County, to address DOI concerns regarding costs of the *Aamodt* settlement. The issues, however, are large and complex and must be addressed, one way or the other, in order for the Pueblos to protect their interests.

In this comment letter, we first review applicable law and policy related to the agencies' trust obligations. We then discuss the DEIS' failure to fully comply with NEPA procedures by failing to address a key related reasonably foreseeable action that would be necessary in order to have San Juan-Chama Project water rights to put into the diversion project beyond the next eleven years. We explain how this lack of analysis undermines the accuracy and adequacy of the DEIS and the agencies' ability, pursuant to their trust obligations, to analyze and substantively address impacts to the Pueblos. Because of these deficiencies, NEPA requires that the analysis now be properly completed and a revised DEIS published for public review and comment.

**II. THE THREE FEDERAL AGENCIES HAVE A FIDUCIARY DUTY  
TO SUBSTANTIVELY ADDRESS EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION  
ON THE PROTECTION OF THE WATER RIGHTS OF THE PUEBLOS**

The federal trust responsibility requires the protection of the rights and resources which sustain the tribes' sovereign status and way of life. These rights include rights reserved by tribes themselves, as well as rights created or recognized by treaty, statute, executive order, or judicial



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decision, on or off the reservation. *E.g., United States v. Winans*, 198 U.S. 371, 381 (1905); *Antoine v. Washington*, 420 U.S. 194, 204-06 (1975). In many instances, tribes hold vested aboriginal rights to property, including water, based upon actual occupancy from time immemorial. *E.g., New Mexico v. Aamodt*, 618 F. Supp. 993 (D.N.M. 1985).

In administering its fiduciary duties, the federal government is charged with "moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust" and should be "judged by the most exacting fiduciary standard." *Seminole Nation v. United States*, 316 U.S. 286, 296 (1942). It is well settled that the trust responsibility applies to all federal agencies whose actions impact Indians. *E.g., Nance v. EPA*, 645 F.2d 701, 711 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1981); *see also* Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* 225 (1982 ed.) ("[T]he federal trust responsibility imposes strict fiduciary standards on the conduct of executive agencies – unless, of course, Congress has expressly authorized a deviation from these standards in exercise of its 'plenary' power.").

The Pueblos have significant rights to both surface and groundwater resources, *see Aamodt*, 618 F.Supp. at 1010, and the federal agencies' fiduciary duty to protect tribal rights and resources includes these water rights. DOI and USDA policy clearly recognize that Indian trust assets entitled to protection under the trust responsibility include water rights. 512 DM 2.2 (Dec. 1995); USDA Forest Service, *Forest Service National Resource Guide to American Indian and Alaska Native Relations*, FS-600 (April 1997) ("FS Tribal Relations Guide") at 56-57; USDA Forest Service Manual 1563 (effective June 1990) *cited in* FS Tribal Relations Guide at A-12,

To help avoid or mitigate Indian trust asset impacts resulting from a proposed federal action, DOI has adopted procedures requiring Indian trust asset impacts to be analyzed during the NEPA process. DOI procedures require that "[a]ny effect [on Indian trust assets] must be explicitly addressed in the planning/decision documents, including, but not limited to . . . Environmental Impact Statements . . ." 512 DM 2.4 (A). Such documents "shall . . . [e]xplain how the decision will be consistent with the DOI's trust responsibility." *Id.* DOI policy, of course, applies to both the BLM and BOR. The FS, as a USDA agency, acknowledged in its own guidance manual regarding tribal relations that a detailed discussion is needed in an EIS regarding any trust resources that are "related to the proposed action" along with a discussion of the need for any "special consideration or protection" resulting from the trust duty. FS Tribal Relations Guide at 56-57.

It is important to note that DOI agencies' and USDA agencies' legal duties with respect to Indian trust assets are not limited to NEPA's procedural requirements. NEPA's role primarily is procedural – "to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences." 40 C.F.R. § 1500.1(c). FS's, BOR's, and BLM's trust responsibility to the Pueblos, however, requires that these federal agencies do more than merely advance a process of informed decision-making. Indeed, the Forest Service's own guidance regarding tribal relations succinctly sums up that substantive trust obligation: "[f]ulfilling the

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trust duty is accomplished through actions, not by writing books or environmental documents, [and] not through process or procedure." FS Tribal Relations Guide at 53.

This applies as well to mitigation measures resulting from NEPA. Council on Environmental Quality ("CEQ") regulations regarding NEPA clarify that mitigation measures must be discussed in environmental impact statements. 40 C.F.R. §§ 1502.14 (f) and 1502.16(h). While, once again, NEPA outlines a procedural or process requirement, federal agencies must do more through NEPA to fulfill their fiduciary obligations. The government, as trustee, has a substantive obligation to mitigate adverse impacts to the trust assets belonging to Indian nations as part of the duty to protect those resources. For instance, this is discussed quite clearly in the policies of the BOR:

The first strategy should be to avoid causing significant adverse impact. When this is not possible, an attempt should be made to minimize such impacts. If adverse impacts do occur, the next step is to identify mitigation or compensation measures to offset adverse impacts so that there is no net loss to the Indian beneficial owners of the asset.

Bureau of Reclamation, *Indian Trust Asset Policy and NEPA Implementing Procedures: Questions and Answers about the Policy and Procedures* section V-1 at 13 (Aug. 31, 1994)

BOR policy also clearly states that a mitigation determination must be done through consultation with the affected tribes, *see id.*, and that working "government-to-government" with tribes "requires that federal agencies design solutions and tailor federal programs, in appropriate circumstances, to address specific or unique needs of Indian tribes." *Id.*, section II-6 at 7.

**III. THE FEDERAL AGENCIES VIOLATED NEPA BY FAILING TO EVEN DISCUSS IMPACTS IN THE DEIS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RELATED FEDERAL ACTION OF OBTAINING A NEW CONTRACT FOR THE SAN JUAN-CHAMA PROJECT RIGHTS**

The DEIS states that the capacity of the Buckman Water Diversion Project is based upon the City's and County's near-term water demands through the year 2010 and upon Las Campañas' long-term water demands through the year 2015 for a completed build-out of approximately 1,717 homes, a dramatic increase from the 410 homes currently built and occupied within that subdivision. *See* DEIS at 2, 6, 100, and 182. The DEIS states that "[m]ost of the water to be diverted [to serve demand for the project] would be derived from the San Juan-Chama Project" *id.* at 1, "including all of the City's portion." *Id.* at 108. The DEIS assumes that "[t]he City and County would exercise their full San Juan-Chama allocation" *id.* at 104, which constitutes 5,605 acre-feet per year ("afy"). *Id.* at 97. Of that joint allocation of San Juan-Chama Project water, the City would receive 5,230 afy, of which it appears from the document 1,200 afy the City would

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continue to lease to Las Campanas. See *id.* at 97-98, 100, and 139. The DEIS notes that the City is pursuing leasing an additional 3,000 afy of San Juan-Chama Project water rights from the Jicarilla Apache Nation's permanent allocation but states that the "primary near-term use of that water would be for depletion offsets" for the Buckman wellfield. *Id.* at 111. In other words, the "near-term use" of the City's lease of the Jicarilla Apache Nation's San Juan-Chama Project water would result in water remaining in the Rio Grande instead of being diverted through the Buckman Water Diversion Project.

Although the DEIS does acknowledge that the joint 5,605 afy City/County San Juan-Chama Project allocation is based upon a contractual agreement with the BOR, *see id.* at 97-98, nowhere in the DEIS do the agencies acknowledge that the San Juan-Chama Project contract with BOR upon which the City, County, and Las Campanas rely to justify this diversion project expires in the year 2016 and has not yet been renewed. Moreover, there is no discussion or analysis of the fact that the contract at issue is a BOR water service contract, which by definition has a term of duration, and has not been converted into a permanent, never expiring repayment contract. While it is true that this water service contract does contain a renewal clause stating the contract may be renewed at the contractor's option, the contract clarifies that the same terms and conditions need not apply to a new water service contract and new terms and conditions can be negotiated by the parties, including the BOR, as part of a renewal of that water service contract. To the extent that the City and County have exercised the option to commence renewal negotiations and BOR has consented to negotiate by establishing a "Basis of Negotiation," as we explain below, that only makes the complete failure of the federal agencies to even acknowledge this related federal action more egregious.

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CEQ regulations for NEPA instruct that indirect effects caused by a proposed action must be analyzed as part of an environmental impact statement. 40 C.F.R. § 1508.8(b). An indirect effect can occur "later in time or farther removed in distance" than a direct effect but still must be "reasonably foreseeable." *Id.* In this case, it does appear that a renewed or converted San Juan-Chama Project allocation contract approved by the BOR to benefit the City and County, and, by extension via leasing, Las Campanas, is a reasonably foreseeable action. Why else would a rather large surface water diversion with the stated purpose of diverting primarily San Juan-Chama Project water be built? The DEIS does discuss other indirect effects, such as the need for Las Campanas to keep its current leases of water rights in place and for the County to lease or purchase additional rights (*see id.* at 108), but fails to address or analyze this key indirect effect, the need for a new approved San Juan-Chama Project allocation contract, be it a renewal of the water service contract or conversion to a new repayment contract. This lack of discussion of a necessary and foreseeable contract renewal or conversion with the attendant contract approval from BOR is especially curious given the fact that the authors of the DEIS are careful to state that any lease by the City of the Jicarilla Apache Nation's permanent San Juan-Chama Project allocation would be subject to approval by the BOR and any leasing or purchasing of other water rights by Las Campanas or the County would require approval from the New Mexico Office of

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<p>the State Engineer. DEIS at 98 and 108</p>	
<p>The failure of the federal agencies to include any discussion whatsoever of this related federal action for renewal or conversion of a contract allocating San Juan-Chama Project water to be diverted through the project might also be looked upon as a failure to conduct a proper cumulative impact analysis in accordance with NEPA. CEQ regulations for NEPA define "cumulative impact" as "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency . . . undertakes such other actions." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7. The DEIS does discuss other cumulative impacts regarding the proposed action, e.g., DEIS at 81, but fails to address or analyze this critical cumulative impact. The situation appears analogous to having an environmental impact statement regarding a proposed road in a roadless part of a forest and then not discussing any reasonably foreseeable timber sales resulting from there being a new road. If the sales were sufficiently certain to justify constructing the road in the first place, then the sales would be sufficiently certain to merit having their cumulative environmental impacts analyzed along with the road.</p>	<p>4-2 Cont.</p>
<p>Segmentation of the San Juan-Chama Project contract renewal or conversion discussion into an entirely separate NEPA document without having any discussion of its related impacts on the diversion project at issue is inappropriate because the two actions -- the contract renewal/conversion and the surface water diversion project to directly divert the water that must be the subject of the new contract -- have a strong connection and interrelationship. That strong connection is bolstered by statements throughout the DEIS, such as "[w]ith the diversion in place, the City and County could directly divert their full allocation of San Juan-Chama Project water . . ." <i>Id.</i> at 107; <i>id.</i> at 116 ("This project would allow the City and County to withdraw their allotment of San Juan-Chama water directly from the Rio Grande.").</p>	
<p>This failure to include any mention in the DEIS of the need for BOR to renew or convert a contract for the City's and County's current San Juan-Chama Project allocation in order to make the project continue to work beyond 2016, and the assumption that the full amount of this current imported water allocation has some sort of perpetual status, pervades and infects the entire analysis and constitutes a violation of NEPA. Moreover, as discussed below, the failure to conduct a proper NEPA analysis also has resulted in the inability of the federal agencies to perform a meaningful Indian trust assets analysis in the DEIS.</p>	
<p><b>IV. THE FAILURE TO PERFORM ANY ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS RELATED TO THE NEED FOR A NEW SAN JUAN-CHAMA PROJECT CONTRACT HAS RESULTED IN A WOEFULLY DEFICIENT INDIAN TRUST ASSETS ANALYSIS</b></p>	<p>4-3</p>
<p>There are numerous references in the DEIS of the willingness of the agencies to conduct further government-to-government consultation with the Pueblos and any other Indian nations</p>	

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regarding the project. See DEIS at 2, 23, 145, 148, and 191. Despite these numerous references to consultation, there appears to be a grand total of only six sentences in the 200-plus page DEIS specifically addressing impacts of the proposed action on Indian trust assets. In the text of the DEIS, the following three-sentence Indian trust asset "analysis" occurs:

Indian Trust Assets or resources are defined as legal interests in assets held in trust by the U.S. Government for Indian tribes or individual tribal members. There are no Indian Trust lands or assets within the potential effect area. The nearest tribal lands belonging to San Ildefonso Pueblo are located directly across the Rio Grande from the proposed diversion structure and sediment facility pond and well north of the associated roadway and pipeline corridors.

DEIS at 84.

In addition, in a table summarizing the proposed action and alternatives, there are three more sentences "analyzing" impacts of the proposed action on Indian trust assets:

The facilities at the Buckman townsite would be visible from San Ildefonso lands. San Ildefonso Pueblo representatives have not expressed opposition to the Proposed Action during discussions with BLM and FS personnel. There would be no adverse effects to Indian Trust Assets.

*Id.* at 76.

This lack of meaningful analysis is matched by the paltry assessment of environmental justice impacts to the Pueblos, *see id.* at 190, even though Executive Order 12898, which is cited in the DEIS, states that the requirement to address environmental justice concerns resulting from federal agency operations must apply equally to Native American programs. Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," 59 Fed. Reg. 7629 section 6-606 (Feb. 16, 1994).

The federal agencies' failure to include an analysis of the cumulative impacts or indirect effects related to the proposed action from the need for a BOR renewal or conversion of the San Juan-Chama Project contract not only violates process requirements of NEPA but also results in a failure of the federal agencies to comply with their own policies regarding analysis and potential mitigation of impacts to the Indian trust assets of the Pueblos. The BOR has been on notice for years of Pueblo concerns regarding renewal or conversion of any San Juan-Chama Project contracts as that renewal or conversion relates to BOR obligations in the settlement of the *Aamodt* litigation. While there are many aspects of this court-ordered *Aamodt* settlement process that remain confidential pursuant to court order, the discussion here is based upon information that is in the public domain. The Pueblos submit that some analysis can occur based upon public

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information even as negotiations continue.

In government-to-government consultation with the BOR on September 4, 2002, the four *Aamodt* Pueblos (Tesuque, Pojoaque, Nambe, and San Ildefonso) clearly stated their opposition to having their trustee convert any of the San Juan-Chama Project water service contracts with upcoming expiration dates, including that of the City and County, into permanent water supply contracts or otherwise renewing any such contracts in the absence of BOR fulfilling the commitments its Commissioner made earlier that year to the four *Aamodt* Pueblos to secure an imported water supply as part of a settlement of the *Aamodt* adjudication, a settlement process in which the BOR was and is still involved. The four *Aamodt* Pueblos reiterated that concern in writing to the BOR Albuquerque Area Manager on January 16, 2003, reminding the BOR that the Secretary of the Interior retains significant discretion regarding the renewal of these contracts and the exercise of that discretion should be used to help the Commissioner of BOR fulfill his stated commitment to the Pueblos to find that additional *Aamodt* settlement water.

This, of course, is no less pressing an issue today given the DOI's rather recent pronouncements about its opposition to the costs of the *Aamodt* settlement. Some of the most significant cost-savings for the settlement, however, could occur through BOR providing even a small amount of San Juan-Chama Project water for the *Aamodt* settlement. To illustrate the point, it is useful to look at the DEIS. The DEIS states that the Buckman Water Diversion Project will provide the necessary infrastructure and allow Las Campañas to use all of its leased 1,200 afy of San Juan-Chama Project water. The DEIS states that, along with its other water supplies, 1,200 afy of leased San Juan-Chama Project water will allow Las Campañas to provide water for approximately 1,300 additional one-to-five acre homesites for luxury million or multi-million dollar homes. See DEIS at 139 and 182. That same quantity of San Juan-Chama Project water if allocated to the *Aamodt* settlement process could result in federal cost savings in the tens of millions of dollars and greatly facilitate the settlement of an almost 39-year old general stream adjudication, one of the oldest lawsuits in the entire nation, involving the United States, the State of New Mexico, four Pueblos, and more than 1,000 non-Indian defendants while also providing a mechanism to facilitate regional solutions that promote goodwill between the Pueblos and the City and County.

Of course, by assuming that the City and County and Las Campañas simply have, and will continue in the future to have, their current San Juan-Chama Project allocation, and by ignoring the indirect effects or cumulative impacts to the proposed action from this necessary and closely related action of a contract renewal or conversion, the DEIS fails to analyze how this proposed action could have the critical cumulative impacts or indirect effects that also affect the federal government's ability to protect the Pueblos' trust assets in the *Aamodt* process. Without the analysis required by NEPA and the DOI's and USDA's own policies regarding fulfillment of the trust responsibility as discussed above, there can be no meaningful discussion of how to avoid, minimize, or offset impacts to the Pueblos, as is mandated in BOR's own policies. To

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comply with NEPA, the analysis in the DEIS must be revised to include the related San Juan-Chama Project contract action. Impacts and effects on the trust resources of the Pueblos must then be analyzed in accordance with the agencies' policies regarding trust obligations and mitigation measures discussed. The Pueblos should then have another opportunity to comment.

It is clear that far more is required than the minimal discussion of Indian trust assets currently found in the DEIS. For instance, in *Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of Indians v. Morton*, the Pyramid Lake Tribe challenged regulations promulgated by BOR to regulate the operation of the Newlands Project, a federal BOR project in Nevada. The Tribe charged that BOR had not adequately considered the tribal interests in crafting the regulations that controlled the water supply available to the project. The district court agreed:

In order to fulfill his fiduciary duty, the Secretary [of the Interior] must insure, to the extent of his power, that all water not obligated by court decree or contract with the District goes to Pyramid Lake.

\* \* \*

The Secretary was obliged to formulate a closely developed regulation that would preserve water for the Tribe. He was further obliged to assert his statutory and contractual authority to the fullest extent possible to accomplish this result. Difficult as this process would be, and troublesome as the repercussions of his actions might be, the Secretary was required to resolve the conflicting claims in a precise manner that would indicate the weight given to each interest before him. Possible difficulties ahead could not simply be blunted by a "judgment call" calculated to placate temporarily conflicting claims to precious water. The Secretary's action is therefore doubly defective and irrational because it fails to demonstrate an adequate recognition of his fiduciary duty to the Tribe. This also is an abuse of discretion and not in accordance with law.

354 F. Supp. 252, 256-57 (D.C. 1972), judgment reversed on other grounds, *Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of Indians v. Morton*, 499 F.2d 1095 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

While it is true that the Secretary of the Interior must respect all congressionally-imposed obligations and that a DOI agency therefore does not automatically breach its duties to tribes solely by representing potentially conflicting interests, see *Nevada v. United States*, 463 U.S. 110, 143, 145 n.16 (1983), when there is some discretion to provide for more than one option, the law instructs that decisions must be made that promote tribal interests:

When the Secretary is acting in his fiduciary role rather than solely as a regulator and is faced with a decision for which there is more than one "reasonable" choice

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as that term is used in administrative law, he must choose the alternative that is in the best interests of the Indian tribe. In short, he cannot escape his role as trustee by donning the mantle of administrator . . . .

*Jicarilla Apache Tribe v. Supron Energy Corp.*, 728 F. 2d 1555, 1567 (10<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1984)(Seymour, J. concurring in part, dissenting in part), *as modified*, 782 F.2d 855 (10<sup>th</sup> Cir.) (en banc) (per curiam) (adopting dissenting opinion of Seymour, J.); *accord Burlington Resources Oil & Gas Co. v. United States Department of Interior*, 21 F. Supp. 2d 1, 4-5 (D.C. 1998) (Secretary's decision must satisfy the "arbitrary and capricious" standard and provide optimum advantage for the trust beneficiary).

The City's and County's San Juan-Chama Project allocation that, according to the DEIS, is the water that is primarily to be diverted through the proposed action diversion project is clearly under contract now until 2016. However, at the expiration of that contract, the allocation is subject to renewal negotiations in which BOR, acting for the Secretary of the Interior, has a significant amount of discretion. This is an indirect or cumulative impact related to the proposed action which must be analyzed as part of NEPA in order for those effects or impacts to be properly addressed in an Indian trust assets analysis for the Pueblos. Such an analysis should address imported water needs for the Pueblos described in the *Aamodt* settlement that was released to the public (without any opposition then from DOI) in spring of 2004. In accordance with DOI and USDA policies and procedures, the DEIS must explain and assure that the decision about the proposed action, taking into account critical indirect effects or cumulative impacts regarding contract renewal or conversion, is consistent with the trust responsibility by first explaining how the proposed action and the related contract renewal or conversion could impact the protection of the Pueblos' rights in the *Aamodt* settlement process. That explanation must also include a discussion of how the proposed action and the related contract renewal or conversion would be consistent with the federal agencies' responsibility to protect and promote Pueblo water rights through the *Aamodt* settlement process. Only then, can the agencies, through government-to-government consultation have a meaningful dialogue with the Pueblos regarding mitigation measures that may be necessary to reconcile potential conflicts for the federal agencies, especially BOR, in a manner that promotes the protection of the tribal interests through a settlement.

As the discussion above illustrates, the DEIS analysis is deeply flawed and those flaws ripple through the entire document and impede the ability for any meaningful analysis of impacts to the Pueblos. NEPA regulations make clear that an agency should prepare a draft environmental impact statement with the same general thoroughness as it will its final impact statement and that "[i]f a draft statement is so inadequate as to preclude meaningful analysis, the agency shall prepare and circulate a revised draft of the appropriate portion." 40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(a). Thus, the only cure to correct the numerous deficiencies discussed herein is to prepare and circulate a revised DEIS for further comment.

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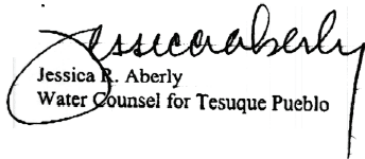
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**V. CONCLUSION**

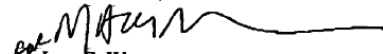
The concerns we raise here regarding the lack of analysis in the DEIS of the need for a new San Juan-Chama Project contract for the proposed action are part of a broader concern about how and when discussions about the renewal or conversion of existing San Juan-Chama Project water service contracts occur. It is counter to the federal government's fiduciary duties for it to make new commitments regarding San Juan-Chama Project water to resolve the non-Indian regional water issues while Pueblo needs and claims remain unresolved. This DEIS only highlights the problem but it is part of a larger issue that must be addressed soon.

Very truly yours,

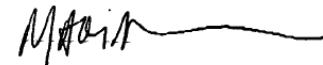
ROTHSTEIN, DONATELLI, HUGHES,  
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Maria O'Brien  
Water Counsel for Pojoaque Pueblo

cc: Honorable Mark Mitchell, Governor, Tesuque Pueblo  
Honorable George Rivera, Governor, Pojoaque Pueblo

**ROTHSTEIN, DONATELLI, HUGHES, DAHLSTROM & SCHOENBURG, LLP**

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**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET**

The attached document is being transmitted:

Sanford Hurlocker                      FAX # 505/753-9411

**FROM:** Jessica Aberly, Esq.

**DATE:** 2/14/05

Comments on the Buckman Water Diversion Project Draft Environmental Impact  
Statement from the Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque

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SANTA FE-TEMPE-ALBUQUERQUE-TAOS  
500 FOURTH STREET NW-SUITE 400-ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87102

## 5. Joni Arends, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety

February 14, 2005

**Comment  
Code**

By email to: [comments-southwestern-santafe-espanola@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-santafe-espanola@fs.fed.us)

Mr. Sanford "Sandy" Hurlocker  
USDA Forest Service, Santa Fe National Forest  
Española Ranger District  
P. O. Box 3307  
Española, NM 87533

Re: Comments of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety about the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project

Dear Mr. Hurlocker:

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) make the following general comments about the draft Environmental Impact Statement (draft EIS) for the Buckman Water Diversion Project. CCNS is a Santa Fe-based non-governmental organization that formed in 1988 to voice citizens' concerns about the transportation of radioactive and hazardous waste from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) through Santa Fe to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, located near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The mission of CCNS is to protect all living beings and the environment from the effects of radioactive and other hazardous materials now and in the future.

CCNS renews our request for an extension of time to comment on the draft EIS for the Buckman Water Diversion Project due to the problems in obtaining documents referenced in the draft EIS. We received copies of documents requested at the January 26, 2005 public meeting at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center. Unfortunately, important pages are missing from the "City of Santa Fe Implementation of Supplemental Buckman Wells" report, October 2002. These pages include 1-3, 1-6 to 1-8, which includes Table 1-5, which is referenced elsewhere in the document. Also missing are pages 2-13 and 2-16 to the end of that section. There may be other pages missing, but we cannot know unless we review the original document in the administrative record. It is very disappointing to receive a document that we have been requesting for over 2 years and to find out a few short days before the comment period ends, and over a weekend, that important pages are missing.

5-1

1. We find the draft EIS to be inadequate and technically indefensible because it does not take into consideration the conclusions and recommendations found in the following reports about contamination issues associated with LANL, a nuclear weapons facility located on the west side of the Rio Grande, across from the proposed diversion site. CCNS believes that a thorough analysis must be done that incorporates information about LANL contaminants before over \$100 million is invested in the Buckman Water Diversion Project.

5-2

	<u>Comment Code</u>
<p>Some government officials and their contractors argue that because the Buckman Water Diversion Project is a surface water project, CCNS's concerns may be dismissed. However, recent New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) reports reveal that more plutonium has left the LANL site through the Pueblo/Los Alamos Canyon system since the May 2000 Cerro Grande fire than since the 1950s and 1960s. The Pueblo/Los Alamos Canyon system flows to and discharges into the Rio Grande less than two miles upstream of the proposed Diversion Project site.</p>	5-2 Cont.
<p>In addition, over 18 million cubic feet of radioactive and hazardous waste has been buried in unlined trenches, shafts and pits on the Pajarito Plateau over the past 60 years by the Department of Energy (DOE). This amount is almost three times the waste than will be disposed at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), located near Carlsbad, New Mexico. Sampling efforts by the NMED indicate that LANL contaminants are being found in the springs that discharge groundwater from the Pajarito Plateau and feed the Rio Grande.</p>	
<p>Furthermore, Charlie Nylander, of the LANL Water Research Technical Assistance Office, recently reported at the October 14, 2004 meeting of 1000 Friends of New Mexico in Santa Fe that over 60% of the recharge for the Buckman Wellfield comes from the Pajarito Plateau.</p>	5-3
<p>Los Alamos County depends on groundwater for 100% of its drinking water. Pete Padilla, of Los Alamos County, reported on September 8, 2004 at the CCNS offices that Los Alamos County has shut off two of its municipal wells due to recent findings of contamination in them.</p>	5-4
<p>Therefore, CCNS strongly urges the Santa Fe National Forest of the U.S. Forest Service (FS) and the Taos Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to review, consider and incorporate the findings and conclusions found in the following reports in the final EIS for the Buckman Water Diversion Project:</p>	
<p>a. Recent LANL reports indicate that the drawdown of the Buckman Wellfield will draw LANL contaminants into the Wellfield.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Analysis of Capture Zones of the Buckman Wellfield and a Proposed Horizontal Collector Well North of the Otowi Bridge," LA-UR-02-2750, by Velimir V. Vesselinov and Elizabeth H. Keating.</li> <li>• "Coupling Basin- and Site-Scale Inverse Models of the Española Aquifer," LA-UR-02-484, by Elizabeth H. Keating, et al.</li> </ul>	5-5
<p>b. Recent CCNS report about LANL groundwater contamination data from the wells on the Pajarito Plateau and springs at the Rio Grande.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "New Mexico's Right to Know: The Potential for Groundwater Contaminants from Los Alamos National Laboratory to Reach the Rio Grande," by George Rice, prepared for CCNS, July 2004, <a href="http://www.nuclearactive.org">www.nuclearactive.org</a>. This report compiles LANL and NMED data about groundwater contamination.</li> </ul>	

	<u>Comment Code</u>
<p>c. NMED reports. These reports document the highest levels of plutonium leaving LANL since the 1950's and 1960's through storm water events in the Pueblo/Los Alamos Canyon system, which discharges to the Rio Grande above the diversion site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Post Cerro Grande Fire Channel Morphology in Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 West: and Storm Water Transport of Plutonium 239/240 in Suspended Sediments, Los Alamos County, New Mexico,” by Dave Englert, Ralph Ford-Schmid and Kenny Bransford, November 2003, <a href="http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/DOE_Oversight/pubs.htm">http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/DOE_Oversight/pubs.htm</a>.</li> <li>• “Post Cerro Grande Fire Channel Morphology in Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 East, Los Alamos County, New Mexico,” by Ralph Ford-Schmid and Dave Englert, <a href="http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/DOE_Oversight/pubs.htm">http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/DOE_Oversight/pubs.htm</a>.</li> </ul>	} <b>5-5 Cont.</b>
<p>d. NMED report. This report demonstrates a chemical composition connection between LANL's Test Well 1 and the CCNS Spring through the use of Stiff Diagrams. CCNS Spring is located about four miles hydraulically down-gradient from Test Well 1. It is located near the proposed diversion site. These findings may demonstrate a contaminant travel time of more than 350 feet per year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Ground-Water Quality Atlas for Los Alamos County, New Mexico,” by Dennis McQuillan, Michael Dale, John Young and Kim Granzow, <a href="http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/GWQ%20Atlas/Los_Alamos_County.html">http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/GWQ%20Atlas/Los_Alamos_County.html</a>.</li> </ul>	}
<p>2. CCNS strongly urges the FS and BLM to augment the final EIS with a chapter on potential LANL impacts. We suggest that the FS and BLM consult with the County of Los Alamos about their water usage, San Juan-Chama water rights and contamination before the final EIS is prepared.</p>	} <b>5-6</b>
<p>3. We are concerned about the limited distribution of the draft EIS. We note that the individual members of the Santa Fe and Española City Councils were not provided with copies of the draft. Copies of the draft EIS should be distributed to these decision makers at your earliest convenience. The final EIS should be distributed to them as well.</p>	} <b>5-7</b>
<p>4. We were disappointed about the limited distribution of public service announcements (PSAs) regarding the availability of the documents and associated public meetings to radio stations. The distribution of information about the availability of the document and the meetings associated with them should be more accessible to the Northern New Mexico community. We strongly urge that any further PSAs be in English and Spanish and be sent to more radio stations in Santa Fe, including KSWV and KSFR, and in Española, KDCE as well.</p>	} <b>5-8</b>
<p>5. In the final EIS, please explain the extent of the consultation with tribal organizations with respect to the draft EIS. Also, please explain the “follow-up consultation [that] will be scheduled with any tribal organizations that express interest in the project.” p. 2 draft EIS. CCNS strongly suggests that consultation take place with recognized land grant holders as well.</p>	} <b>5-9</b>
<p>6. We were disappointed to find that no glossary was included in the document. This is a technical document that includes terms that may not be known by the general public reviewing the document. We strongly suggest that a glossary be included in the final EIS.</p>	} <b>5-10</b>

7. We appreciate the extensive list of acronyms. } **5-11**

8. At the scoping meeting and on the October 16, 2002 tour, we expressed our concern that LANL is not represented on the maps about the proposal. In fact, we were surprised to see on Figure 2 that the label “Proposed Diversion Location” covers the LANL site. p. 18 draft EIS. } **5-12**

9. We strongly suggest that the Aamodt Settlement Area be included on the maps in the final EIS. } **5-13**

10. It is unclear in the draft what “near-term” means. It is also unclear if the diversion project will end in 2010 or if it will continue past that time. Is there a different definition of “near-term” for the City of Santa Fe, County of Santa Fe and Las Campanas? If so, those definitions should be included in the final EIS. p. 2 draft EIS. } **5-14**

The projected costs of the proposal should be included in this section as well. } **5-15**

11. Please explain the technical basis for the statement that “water conservation measures alone would not meet the purpose and need for the project.” p. 4 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Study, draft EIS. } **5-16**

12. Please explain in the final EIS why the San Ildefonso Area was eliminated from the alternatives considered. Please describe the water quality issues that were considered in this review. p. 29 draft EIS. } **5-17**

13. Please explain in the final EIS why under low flow conditions (approximately 200 cubic feet per second (cfs)) the diversion could withdraw up to 14% of the river’s flow (28.2 cfs/200 cfs = 0.141). p. 51 draft EIS. } **5-18**

14. Please explain in the final EIS why the City and County water use is projected to increase by 37% between 2001 and 2010 (12,000 acre-feet per year to 16,460 acre-feet per year). Is this a realistic projection? p. 101 draft EIS. } **5-19**

15. We note in a 2002 public meeting handout that the Santa Fe County Water Rights Demand Projections for the Community College District will quadruple between 2004 and 2040. Please explain this increase in the final EIS. } **5-20**

16. We note in Figure 3 that the proposed City/County Treatment Water Pipeline terminates a little south of I-25. The final EIS should explain what it planned for that terminus. p. 20 draft EIS. } **5-21**

17. CCNS believes that the impacts to water quality and quantity should be analyzed as issues in the final EIS, along with waste generation, storage and disposal as a result of acting on the proposal. Please examine these issues in the final EIS. p. 4 draft EIS. If the alternative for disposing of solids in the Caja del Rio Landfill is chosen, please explain how that disposal will impact the life of the landfill. p. 49 draft EIS. } **5-22**

18. The section on Water Resources should include an explanation about how the “Proposed Action would result in less reliance on ground water for local water supplies, and would have a beneficial effect on local ground water resources.” It is unclear from the draft EIS about the current condition of the local ground water resources. A table would be helpful which would list how } **5-23**

**Comment  
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much water would be diverted per year to benefit the local ground water resources. Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action, p. 11 draft EIS.	} <b>5-23 Cont.</b>
19. Are there plans to divert water from the proposed project to the Santa Fe River in order to offset existing drawdown? p. 20 draft EIS.	} <b>5-24</b>
20. CCNS believes that any damage to the Buckman Townsite is an unacceptable consequence of the proposed project. If any alternatives are chosen which will damage the Buckman Townsite, full mitigation plans must be included in the final EIS.	} <b>5-25</b>
21. If the project proceeds forward, CCNS believes that all materials should be purchased from merchants within the City of Santa Fe and the County of Santa Fe. All workers on the project should be paid a living wage, at a minimum. p. 32 draft EIS.	} <b>5-26</b>
22. The final EIS should explain where the gauges will be placed for monitoring the flows through the pipelines and through the booster stations. It should also explain where the pumping information will be posted for public inspection purposes. For example, the quantity of water in the reservoirs is published in the local newspapers. If the project proceeds forward, public notice of the diversion amounts should be published in the local newspapers along with the reservoir data. p. 48 draft EIS.	} <b>5-27</b>
23. There seems to be a discrepancy between the figures found in Table 3, "Distribution of expected maximum monthly average diversions" on p. 50 and Table 10, "Estimated average monthly diversions" on p. 106. For December, the average diversion found in Table 10 exceeds the maximum amount in Table 3. Is this correct?	} <b>5-28</b>
24. The final EIS should explain what will happen if the diversion is shut off due to low flows in the Rio Grande. The final EIS should also explain in detail what will happen to the Water Treatment Plants if the diversion project is shut off due to low flows in the Rio Grande. p. 51 draft EIS.	} <b>5-29</b>
25. The final EIS should explain what protection will be placed around the Sediment Facility Alternative SF2. We are concerned that an 8 foot deep pond would be an attractive nuisance. p. 52 draft EIS.	} <b>5-30</b>
26. The orientation of the maps in Figures 16 and 17 should be the same so that one may make a general comparison across the sediment facility alternatives. p. 53 draft EIS.	} <b>5-31</b>
27. The final EIS should explain how many truck trips will be made per day to dispose of dried sand at the Caja del Rio Landfill. p. 54 draft EIS.	} <b>5-32</b>
28. The final EIS should explain the historical impacts to the Denver & Rio Grande railroad grade (the Chili Line) by choosing the Treated Water Pipeline Alternative TWP3. These impacts should be carefully weighed against avoiding construction within Las Campanas Drive. pp. 55-56 draft EIS.	} <b>5-33</b>
29. We were unable to distinguish the alternatives for the Treated Water Pipeline Alternatives in Figure 18 because the figure was printed in black and white. p. 57 draft EIS. We were also unable to distinguish the alternatives for the power upgrade facilities for the proposed action and	} <b>5-34</b>

**Comment  
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- alternative AGP1 in Figure 19 because it was printed in black and white. p. 60 draft EIS. We strongly urge the FS and BLM to print these figures in color in the final EIS. } **5-34  
Cont.**
30. What is the public process for commenting on the implementation plan found under the section “Mitigation Measures and Monitoring Requirements” found on p. 59. The final EIS should explain the process. } **5-35**
31. The final EIS should explain how the public will be notified about “river access delays.” p. 66 draft EIS. Will the City and County be required to post public notices in the local newspapers? } **5-36**
32. The final EIS should explain and reference the specific ground water models that were used for the Flood Plains and Flooding analysis. p. 71 draft EIS. } **5-37**
33. The final EIS should show an example of the “historical architecture” that is proposed to be used on the Buckman townsite. p. 77 draft EIS. } **5-38**
34. The final EIS should list in each section the “individual analysis reports” that were used in the analysis. As explained at the beginning of these comments, our experience with the project record has been poor at best. p. 81 draft EIS. } **5-39**
35. The final EIS should include aquatic life in Table 13 “Santa Fe County special status plants and animals that could occur within the project area.” p. 130 draft EIS. } **5-40**

Thank you for your careful consideration of our comments. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email at [jarends@nuclearactive.org](mailto:jarends@nuclearactive.org).

Sincerely,

Joni Arends  
Executive Director

cc: Santa Fe City Council members  
Española City Council members  
San Ildefonso Pueblo Tribal Council  
Tesuque Pueblo Tribal Council



**6. John R. Buchser, Sierra Club, Northern Group, Rio Grande Chapter**

Northern Group, Rio Grande Chapter  
 Sierra Club  
 1472 South St. Francis Dr.  
 Santa Fe, NM 87505

**Comment**  
**Code**

February 13, 2005

Sanford “Sandy” Hurlocker  
 USDA Forest Service  
 PO Box 3307  
 Española, NM 87533

Re: DEIS, Buckman Water Diversion Project

Dear Mr. Hurlocker:

We would like to thank you for an excellent analysis of the Buckman Water Diversion Project. We support a variation on the preferred alternative that includes characteristics of alternatives SF1 and SF2. There are several issues on which we would like clarification, and on which we may wish to comment:

- On page 51 of the DEIS, mention is made that during “extraordinary sediment transport events” water will not be diverted from the river. Since there are numerous arroyos that empty into the Rio Grande and tributaries above the proposed facility, it seems that it would be common for thunderstorms to raise the sediment load in the river to this ‘extraordinary’ threshold. What is this threshold, and how will operation of the facility be operated in a manner to avoid operation when this threshold is exceeded? } 6-1
- What is the risk of discharge of pollutants into the Rio Grande if a 100-year flood event occurs during the construction of the cofferdam or during the construction of the diversion facility? What is the flow rate against which the cofferdam will protect? } 6-2
- What is the risk of flooding of the sediment separation facility in a 100 year flood event in the Rio Grande and/or nearby arroyos? } 6-3

We support the overall concern of the City and County of Santa Fe that there cannot continue to be so much pumping of underground aquifers, especially the high unsustainable pumping rates that are presently occurring. The use of surface water, to the extent that this use is not significantly to the detriment of the natural environment, is a sound management strategy. However, neither the County nor the City has yet put into place what we believe are adequate controls on their growth or uses of water. } 6-4

We ask that you employ the services of Bill Zeedyk of Sandia Park to assist in review of design for the road improvements proposed. Mr. Zeedyke is a specialist in minimizing the erosive impacts of road building and restoring natural processes to streams. Three goals of this road construction should be (1) to disperse water to enhance growth of native plants, (2) to minimize causing additional erosion, and (3) to aid in aquifer recharge. } 6-5

Hurlocker

February 13, 2005

Page 2

**Comment**  
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The production of large-grained sand at the sediment separation facility appears to present two opportunities (1) the sand can be sold or stored for later use, and (2) by not returning the sand to the river, reduction of the sedimentation rate in Cochiti Lake. We do not believe that return of the sand to the river as presented in option SF1 would present much of a problem to the ecosystem of the river when the volume of this return is well under 1% of the total flow of the river. However, when the river flows are low, this sediment return could have a substantial effect. The cost of hauling the sand to the Caja del Rio dump is significant. We believe that this sand could be sold to local sand and gravel companies, or even given away to local residents. Further, actually putting this sand in a landfill seems like excessive management of a “waste” product. This sand should be relatively clean, and what sand cannot be marketed could be returned to the river during times of high water volume or stored in a much less expensive location than a lined landfill.

6-6

In the economic analysis (page 188) it is mentioned that given the current growth rates of the County and City the rate of new building will need to be constrained in order for the demands on this facility and other water sources to be balanced. We believe, therefore, that included in the analysis of this project should be a recommendation that both the City and the County put in place growth-rate controls which will ensure that the rate of growth does not cause the total demand on water supplies to exceed sustainable rates. Two other essential elements of water management that the City and County need to put in place are water budgets and water reuse strategies.

6-7

Finally, we recommend that this water NOT be used for watering of golf courses, whether by private or public entities. The focus for all water projects should be for uses that provide a higher economic benefit, whether it be tourism, housing, farming, or a multitude of other uses that are more productive to the economy of New Mexico and the region than large expanses of non-native grasses that require huge quantities of water.

6-8

We thank you in advance for considering our comments, and hope that you are able to integrate our recommendations in your final EIS.

Sincerely,

John R. Buchser  
Chair, Northern Group

7. Alonzo Gallegos, Caja del Rio La Majada Livestock Association



Please deliver this FAX to: Sandy Hurlocken  
@ 505 753-9411

From: Bob Alexander  
Ambassador 4 Range

Office:

Bureau of Land Management  
PO Box 27115  
Santa Fe, NM 87502-7115  
Phone: (505) 438-7428  
Fax: (505) 438-7426

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322 Ojo de la Vaca Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87508  
Phone (505) 466-8217  
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Fax: (505) 466-1095

Total Pages, including this cover sheet:

2

Comments:

- 1 Attached are comments from
- 2 Mr Gallegos on the Buckman Project
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

PLANNING

Comment  
Code

2/14/2005

Caja del Rio La Majada Livestock Association  
Alonzo Gallegos  
PO Box 1391  
Pena Blanca, NM 87041

Mr. Sandy Hurlocker,  
NEPA Coordinator  
US Department of Agriculture-Forest Service  
Española Ranger District  
Española New Mexico

Dear Sir:

I would like to make the following comments concerning the Buckman Water Diversion Project Environmental Impact Statement.

1) The potential impacts to the Caja del Rio Grazing Allotment were not addressed. We are concerned that there will be an adverse impact to the wells from additional pumping. Currently we have seven deep livestock watering wells are located on the Caja. They are very deep wells, ranging from 240 feet to 1400 feet, and pumping from the existing wells has lowered the water table in the wells. Due to the problems with the existing wells, we have developed a cooperative program with many agencies to provide supplemental water from the affluent water of the city water treatment plant. A pipeline distributes the water to Forest Service and BLM lands and is available for fire suppression, livestock, wildlife and wild horses.

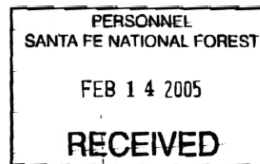
7-1

2) The proposed additional diversion of surface water may as well impact the water situation on the Caja Allotment. I would like to propose that raw water from the pipeline from the proposed diversion to the proposed treatment plant should be made available for available for fire suppression, livestock, wildlife and wild horses on the Caja Allotment also. A tap could be provided on the pipeline before it enters the treatment plant. As ranchers who use the Caja Allotment, we would be willing to provide a historic water right for the project.

7-2

Sincerely,

  
Alonzo Gallegos



**8. Brian Shields, Amigos Bravos, Friends of the Wild Rivers**



Comment  
Code

**P.O.Box 238, Taos, NM 87571**

**Telephone: 505.758.3474**

**Fax: 505.758.7345**

February 14, 2005

By email to: [comments-southwestern-santafe-espanola@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-santafe-espanola@fs.fed.us)

Mr. Sanford “Sandy” Hurlocker  
 USDA Forest Service, Santa Fe National Forest  
 Española Ranger District  
 P. O. Box 3307  
 Española, NM 87533

Re: Comments from Amigos Bravos on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project

Dear Mr. Hurlocker:

On behalf of our Board of Directors and over 1,600 members, Amigos Bravos requests an extension of time to submit additional comments on the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project* (DEIS or Diversion). Given the complexity of the issues addressed by the DEIS and the need for resources to properly address those issues, Amigos Bravos requests that the comment period be extended by another 30 days. The DEIS took three years to complete. Sixty days to respond does not give the public adequate time to prepare a thorough analysis of the document.

} 8-1

The project will have significant impacts on the *Rio Grande* – impacts that have not been adequately assessed or measured.

Specifically, Amigos Bravos is concerned that the DEIS does not meet NEPA standards and requirements for the following reasons:

- The “Purpose and Need” statement is inconsistent with the reality of drought conditions. The DEIS does not address the issue of the availability of San Juan Chama Project water during drought periods – those times that the DEIS identifies as the critical need period for the project. The “Purpose and Need” statement asserts that the Buckman Diversion is required to offset water demands during drought periods. However, it is during drought periods that the San Juan Chama Project Water will experience shortages – thus rendering

} 8-2

the need for the Diversion highly questionable, and at best very costly with minimal offsetting benefits.

} **8-2  
Cont.**

- The “Alternatives” chosen do not meet NEPA requirements. The alternatives chosen for consideration are not consistent with the “Purpose and Need” statement. Instead of providing Alternatives for dealing with the stated need “to provide the water quantities needed to sustain the Santa Fe region during drought conditions,” the DEIS analyzes ‘construction’ alternatives dealing with sediment transport, pipeline construction and powerline upgrades. Realistic “Alternatives” for providing the Santa Fe region with water during drought periods – including importing water from other areas such as the Estancia Basin, recycling wastewater, and adopting smart growth restrictions that would decrease the demand on water – are ignored or not analyzed.
- The DEIS has not been prepared in compliance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The effects of the Diversion on several endangered species known to exist – or being proposed for reintroduction – in the vicinity of the project area has not been analyzed. To enter into compliance with the ESA after the Record of Decision on the Diversion has been issued is contrary to the purpose and intent of NEPA.
- The DEIS ignores any discussion the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. White Rock Canyon contains many of the scenic, cultural, and biological values that make it eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act system. The DEIS does not discuss how the Diversion will impact that eligibility.
- The DEIS is deficient in that it does not address the cumulative effects of habitat fragmentation from dam construction and the dewatering of the river. Although the DEIS lists a series of actions that will create further fragmentation, it does not discuss the effects of those actions on the river ecosystem. The fact that the river is being diverted and dewatered throughout its course is creating a situation whereby (to quote William DeBuys) “the Rio Grande is dying by a thousand cuts”.
- The DEIS is deficient in its lack of consideration of water quality impacts from the Los Alamos National Lab (LANL). The transport of radionuclides and other toxic substances in sediments, stormwater runoff, and groundwater originating on LANL property is one of the most critical water contamination issues facing the State of New Mexico. Given that the future source of drinking water for Santa Fe and Albuquerque will be diverted down gradient of the LANL properties, the DEIS is remiss in not addressing this issue.
- The DEIS is disingenuous in claiming that the Diversion does not affect issues associated with Environmental Justice. The DEIS states clearly that more water from the Diversion will be delivered to new multi-million dollar houses at Las Campanas than to the entire County of Santa Fe. By any standard, this fact alone raises Environment Justice issues.

} **8-3**

} **8-4**

} **8-5**

} **8-6**

} **8-7**

} **8-8**

Amigos Bravos would like to have the opportunity to fully analyze and comment on each of the issues we raise in this letter. In requesting a longer comment period, I wish point out that although Amigos Bravos is listed as an organization “to whom copies of the EIS are sent”, we did not receive a copy until we made a special trip to get one on January 11th. Even then – after a considerable

} **8-9**

amount of time had gone by – we were only provided with one copy. We would like to know which other groups listed actually received a copy in a timely manner.

**Comment**  
**Code**  
**8-9**  
**Cont.**

Thank you for considering an extension of the comment period.

Sincerely,

Brian Shields  
Executive Director

## 9. Joe D. Auburg

Comments on the Draft E.I.S. for the Buckman Water Diversion Project.

**Comment**  
**Code**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the document.

The EIS is well prepared and the contents of the document covers most of the items specified in NEPA. To complete the draft document there needs to be added discussion on alternatives to the proposed diversion. Describing different locations for the diversion is not sufficient to cover NEPA requirements.

What is needed is a discussion of alternatives to the diversion project. This requires inclusion of items, such as how much water is the being used, how much is available and why this diversion is the preferred alternative. The reference on page 30 could be interpreted as an attempt to establish this information. However, this draft does not present justification for this, or for any other alternative: it seems to say the applicant needs this and that is sufficient.

Without a discussion of needs and alternatives for meeting them, I feel this draft document does not fulfill the requirements for a final EIS on the diversion project.

9-1

Sincerely,

Joe D. Auburg

6 Duende Road

Santa Fe, NM 87508

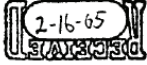
(505) 466-1484

[gembub@comcast.net](mailto:gembub@comcast.net)

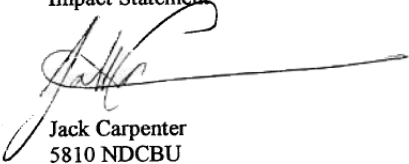
February 7, 2005




10. Jack Carpenter

	<u>Comment Code</u>
<p>February 13, 2005</p> <p>Mr. Sandy Hurlocker P.O. Box 3307 Española, NM 87533</p> <p style="text-align: right; margin-right: 50px;">                       postmark                      2-14-2005                 </p> <p>Subject: Buckman Water Diversion Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement</p> <p>Mr. Hurlocker,</p> <p>The following are comments concerning the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Some may seem as nitpicking, other as more substantial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;">                     The word gage is used extensively in several reports. While this term is acceptable the more correct and common term is gauge-meaning measurement. I will give on this point but educated reader will tend to use the term as gauge.                     <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">}</span> <span style="float: right; margin-right: 10px;">10-1</span> </li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 41 contains a typing error that indicates the document was not proof read prior to sending to the public. Under Buckman Road Upgrade third line from the bottom of the paragraph the sentence starts: "A computer engineer based program". I believe you mean 'engineering'.</li> </ul> <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">}</span> <span style="float: right; margin-right: 10px;">10-2</span> </li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the same line on page 41 a citation to a project record would be appreciated. The way the item is stated leads one to believe a program was run but the results are hidden from the public.</li> </ul> <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">}</span> <span style="float: right; margin-right: 10px;">10-3</span> </li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 47 Diversion Structure is confusing. Other portions of the document indicate the sand would not be returned to the river but removed by trucking. The emphasis is place on trucking throughout the document. Wording should be improved to show what is being discussed with little or no question to us the public.</li> </ul> <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">}</span> <span style="float: right; margin-right: 10px;">10-4</span> </li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 79 Under the Social and Economics Resources section, the no action portion for Population and Housing Growth and Dynamics is not well developed. The documents gives much more detail to anticipated housing and population growth for the action alternatives. The corresponding information for the no action alternative is not given. What happens if the project is delayed or the no action alternative is selected. The effects and cumulative effects of selecting that alternative is not fleshed out nor explained to the public.</li> </ul> <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">}</span> <span style="float: right; margin-right: 10px;">10-5</span> </li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 80 Under the Environmental Justice section the writer took the easy way out. Census data at the county level masks subtle information needed to determine if the executive order is being followed or not. The county data could be easily broken down into block data and then recombined to show the effects to the area directly impacted by the construction and water development. The statement in the table is inadequate.</li> </ul> <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">}</span> <span style="float: right; margin-right: 10px;">10-6</span> </li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 96 is a statement under Surface Water Quality that is not supported by a citation to a published documents or the project record. Hence I must believe the statement is biased by the author of this portion of the document. A citation would clear this up.</li> </ul> <span style="float: right; font-size: 2em;">}</span> <span style="float: right; margin-right: 10px;">10-7</span> </li> </ul>	
<p>- 1 -</p>	

	<u>Comment Code</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page 142 in the second paragraph I would like to understand what a 'shale or downward trend' is. This indicates again the lack of proof reading the document before release the public.</li> </ul>	} 10-8
<p>Page 157 indicates traffic delays if the proposed action is selected over a 12-month timeframe for construction. The same paragraph indicates limited access for 5 months during the water diversion construction. I assume these two activities are concurrent and not consecutive.</p>	} 10-9
<p>The Santa Fe Forest Plan (SFFP) visual (scenic resources) was based on the older Visual Management System (VMS). The proper method would be to use the older system and then compare it to the newer Scenery Management System. This permits the discussion to follow SFFP discussions. In addition, the older system is better understood pending the completion of the revised/updated or whatever the new SFFP will be called. The use of the newer system is not consistent with the SFFP. The older VMS system is consistent with the current SFFP.</p>	} 10-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page 168 and 159 indicate the Buckman road will be maintained by the county. The vehicle control signage should meet the Uniform Traffic Code. Nowhere in the document is this noted.</li> </ul>	} 10-11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The culture resources section and the soil section both indicate the possibility of prehistoric artifacts buried below ground level. The sediment facility on page 174 discussions indicated items to be buried nearly 20 feet under ground. If the other discussions are true there are indication of an older soil layer being overlain by more recent deposits. This is the first place I could find a description of the depth of buried facilities other than pipelines with a depth of about 4 to 6 feet. I am concerned about the likelihood of disturbing deeply buried cultural artifacts. Culture resources are not renewable disturbance of deeply buried soil layers could disturb important resources.</li> </ul>	} 10-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of the Farmington BLM noise guidelines is erroneous. The guidelines are for a natural gas and oil field. The guidelines used should be based on the local area, undeveloped forest and somewhat developed BLM lands. The use of the Farmington BLM guidelines give the development the grace to increase noise levels above background levels.</li> </ul> <p>The noise levels likely are not correlated to wildlife disturbance. This omission should be corrected and presented to the public.</p>	} 10-13
<p>It is interesting to note the fault structure that was reactivated due to the draw down in the Buckman Well Field. The Los Alamos study of the Rio Grande Fault is not mentioned. I believe that study was done in the late 1970's or early to mid 1980's. Some of the Rio Grande valley experiences slight earthquakes on a monthly basis. This information should be obtained and used to expand on the geology discussion.</p>	} 10-14
<p>The Social and Economic resources section is left wanting in several respects. The data is all at the county level which is a good place to start. The data is available to further refine the analysis to the areas being affected. This was not done. In the same light the data could be updated using data readily available as</p>	} 10-15

	<u>Comment Code</u>
<p>projections. Several sources of that projected data are cited in the section as providing other data. Some of this comes across as being selective.</p>	} 10-15
<p>The Environmental Justice section suffers from the same problem as the Social and Economic resources section. The data is available to break the affected portions of the community into small bites. This is not done. The conclusion is not supported by the information that should be included. The selective data used supports the conclusion.</p>	} Cont.
<p>The lack of citations to the project record throughout the document is disturbing. Some literature is referenced granted. The project record would indicate the literature was reviewed and other studies actually were completed. The lack of citations to the project record says trust us. Inclusion of citations indicates the material is taken out of reports, surveys, and studies. Specialists or at least knowledgeable individuals then digest it. The citations would be even more valuable if a project record list is included in the document as an appendix or attachment. As a member of the public looking at the project record index at least a rudimentary idea of the thought process could be obtained.</p>	} 10-16
<p>The lack of citations to the project record throughout the document is disturbing. Some literature is referenced granted. The project record would indicate the literature was reviewed and other studies actually were completed. The lack of citations to the project record says trust us. Inclusion of citations indicates the material is taken out of reports, surveys, and studies. Specialists or at least knowledgeable individuals then digest it. The citations would be even more valuable if a project record list is included in the document as an appendix or attachment. As a member of the public looking at the project record index at least a rudimentary idea of the thought process could be obtained.</p>	} 10-17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Buckman Project is proposed to be designed and constructed with the capacity necessary to meet the City’s and County’s near-term needs for water through the year 2010, and Las Campanas’ needs through community build-out, based on physical, technical, and environmental limitation.” The Buckman road reconstruction will take 12 months based on the document, the other construction about 5 months, the completion of the documentation one could estimate at 3 to 4 months. These times added to today’s date would indicate the project coming on line in late 2006 or early 2007. This estimation is based on finding no buried cultural resources which could according to the document add time. My guesstimate with cultural resources added is the project would not come on line until late 2007 or early 2008. The other possible alternative location could come on line earlier.</li> </ul>	} 10-18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The destruction of a known cultural resource, Buckman town site, is unconsciousable. Damage has already been done. More damage is not the way to go to add so little water to the City of Santa Fe, County of Santa Fe, and provide for a development that never should have been Las Campanas.</li> </ul>	} 10-19
<p>Thank you for the opportunity of making some comments on this Draft Environmental Impact Statement</p>	
	
<p>Jack Carpenter 5810 NDCBU Taos, NM 87571</p>	
<p>- 3 -</p>	

## 11. Alan R. Jager

	<u>Comment Code</u>
	
<p>Alan R. Jager 400 Calle Kokopelli Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 474-9328</p> <p>January 19, 2005</p>	
<p>Mr. Sanford "Sandy" Hurlocker P. O. Box 3307 Española, NM 87533</p> <p><b><u>A REGIONAL SYSTEM FOR DELIVERING SAN JUAN-CHAMA WATER</u></b></p> <p>Dear Mr. Hurlocker:</p> <p>Thank you for including me in the distribution of the Draft EIS for the Buckman Water Diversion Project dated November 2004. I was unable to participate in the scoping meetings and the site visit prior to publishing the Draft EIS. I believe that the proposal to pipe the San Juan-Chama (SJC) water from the Abiquiu Reservoir to the Buckman area was declared to be "out of scope" (p. 25 in the EIS) without adequate engineering or evaluation. In my opinion, it does not make sense to release high quality, sediment-free water from Colorado into the Chama-Rio Grande river system where it picks up sand, silt, septage, medical waste, perchlorate and explosives and, in the future, radioactive waste from Los Alamos (New Mexican, Aug. 22, 2004). The Española waste water treatment plant has had 14 violations since 2001 (New Mexican, Jan. 16, 2005). Nowhere in the Draft EIS does it give the analysis of water quality in the Abiquiu Reservoir or an analysis of the water quality expected to enter the proposed diversion system.</p> <p>The San Juan-Chama water in the Abiquiu Reservoir is sediment-free thus a direct pipeline would eliminate the elaborate and costly setting ponds for the Proposed Action (PA). The Proposed Action requires expensive excavation of sediment and trucking to a disposal site (p. 51). Return of</p>	<p>11-1</p> <p>11-2</p>

**Comment  
Code**

Mr. Sanford "Sandy" Hurlocker  
January 19, 2005  
Page 2

sediment to the Rio Grande, if a NPDES permit is acquired, loses valuable "carriage" water (p. 50). There would be no evaporation or evapotranspiration losses in a pipeline. The treatment of Abiquiu water to drinking water standards would be simpler with less capital and operating costs. There would be far less disturbance to wildlife or plant life (p. 14) or the historic Buckman Townsite (p. 15). There would be no shutdowns due to low flows (p. 51), electrical outages, upstream spills of pollutants, or extraordinary sediment events due to flooding (p. 102). There would be no extreme turbidity due to the installation and removal of the coffer-dam and the excavation of a river bypass (p. 64) with adverse effects on aquatic fauna (p. 65). There would be little effect on wildlife habitat if utilizing a pipeline, thus no need for an animal and avian survey (p. 65). An archaeological survey would still be required but for a greatly reduced area (p. 65). A 24-mile pipeline along the highway to Española was considered at one time. A pipeline ROW could easily be negotiated, especially if the Pueblos were participating. Future water from the Otowi horizontal collector wells (p. 29) could be carried the 6.5 miles to Buckman. A future pipeline will be needed regardless of diversion plans when these wells are put on line. The total distance from the Abiquiu Dam to Buckman via Española is 40 miles. A direct route would be 32 miles, but would require new ROW'S.

A smaller area without major sedimentation ponds would require less re-vegetation. Simpler water treatment facilities would require less piping and trenching and be less costly to build. There would be no need to consider native Rio Grande flows separately (p. 51) or need for the complex accounting for percentages of Otowi flows (p. 109). Fewer permits would be required (p. 26, 67).

I believe that the SJC water contracted to the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, and Las Campanas could be piped directly and tied into the existing Buckman facilities. The San Juan-

**11-2  
Cont.**

**Comment**  
**Code**

Mr. Sanford "Sandy" Hurlocker  
January 19, 2005  
Page 3

Chama pool elevation in the Abiquiu Reservoir is 6,220.00 feet with a crest elevation of 6,375 feet (p. 91). The Buckman well-head elevations are approximately 5,470 feet. Therefore, the static head is between 750 and 905 feet. This appears to provide sufficient pressure to push the Abiquiu waters to a point between Buckman and Santa Fe depending on pipe size and friction losses. The 3,000 acre-feet of SJC water proposed for lease to the City of Santa Fe could be included in the pipeline. The SJC water for Española, Santa Clara, San Juan, and Ildefonso Pueblos could all tie into the piping system with relatively simple treatment at each termination. Federal and State financing is more likely if the Pueblos and Española are included. It is rumored that the Pueblos might have been interested in participating in a piping system had they been fully appraised of the benefits.

11-2  
Cont.

Why was a pipeline from the Abiquiu Reservoir to Buckman declared to be "out of scope" (p. 25)?

11-3

Respectfully,

  
Alan R. Jager

**12. David O. Quintana**

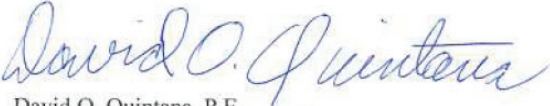
December 22, 2004

Dear Sanford Hurlocker:

I appreciate your agency's courtesy for sending me a copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Buckman Water Diversion Project for review. I am aware of the struggles and difficulties necessary to compile such a document. My cursory review comments of that document follow:

<p>1. <b>If the sediments are returned to the River:</b> Will the return of the sedimentation chemicals result in an increased amount of deposition? If so, what reaches may possibly experience increased depositions and what reaches may possibly experience increased erosion?</p>	} 12-1
<p>2. <b>Possible impacts on vegetation, migratory birds and existing wildlife:</b> (A) the report states that disturbed vegetation will be replaced. Does this statement also apply to salt cedar? (B) My review did not find what the impacts of this project, either during the construction phase or the Operation and Maintenance (O &amp; M) phase, will have on migratory animals. (C) This area has a large rock lichen colony. Will either phase have negative impacts on it?</p>	} 12-2
<p>3. <b>The report states that water withdrawals will be about 4%:</b> Is this statement limited to only the amount of water that is withdrawn from the river? As presented in the report the statement is not definitive.</p>	} 12-3
<p>4. <b>Leased water-rights:</b> The report mentions that additional amounts of water-rights may be purchased, leased, or used from other sources, yet the report implies that only those water-rights currently owned by the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County will have an environmental impact (the report does imply this). Any and all withdrawals from the Rio Grande River through this facility, or because of it, should be accounted for in the report in the same way (that all withdrawals are accounted for).</p>	} 12-4
<p>5. <b>If the sediments are transported to the Caja-Del-Rio landfill:</b> The paved portion of Las Campanas Drive extends well beyond the point indicated on the map on page 57. The report should address the need to upgrade roads that will be used to transport sediments from the Buckman Sedimentation Facility. Acknowledging this as a concern, route TWP3 becomes a viable option. It would not be good use of available data if a newly paved road, such as the newly paved portions of Las Campanas Drive, have to be rebuilt within a short period of time after they are initially constructed (less than 5 years).</p>	} 12-5
<p>6. <b>Pipeline and road (O &amp; M access) concerns:</b> O &amp; M infrastructure needs will raise user-day visits to the areas opened up by this facility. The environmental impact of increased user-day visits to the areas impacted by the various features of the proposed facility should be addressed in the report.</p>	} 12-6
<p>7. <b>Federal Agency management changes:</b> Increased user-day visits resulting from the various features of the proposed facility will have environmental impacts. Those changes will have resource management impacts. Better roads will give the public easier access to the Rio Grande River: (ie., increased rafting activities, increased fire-arm use, increased trail uses-motorized-bicycling-and hiking, other). Will the Federal Agencies with responsible charge of public trust properties in the impacted areas present their proposed changes in this report?</p>	} 12-7

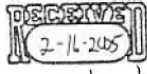
Again, thank you for the opportunity to review this Draft Report. If at any time in the future I may again be of service to your agency, please feel free to notify me.



David O. Quintana, P.E.  
 ph. 505-670-2054 (cell)

**Comment Code**

### 13. Ted C. Williams, BSCE, PE, DEE, PSB

<p><b>T.C. Williams, BSCE, PE, DEE, PSB</b> Retired Environmental Engineer</p>	<p>250 East Alameda Apt. 814 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501 505-984-2664 tedskis@comcast.net</p>	
<p>February 6, 2005</p>		<p><b>Comment</b> <u>Code</u></p>
<p>Sandy Hurlocker, NEPA Coordinator USDA-FS Espanola Ranger District P.O. Box 3307 Espanola, NM 87533</p>	 postmark 2-14-2005	
<p>RE EIS for Buckman Diversion Project</p>		
<p>Dear Sir:</p>		
<p>An important consideration in an environmental impact analysis has to be the impact upon the humans in the area. Notably absent is the cost of constructing and operating the project. The impact of these costs on the citizens of the City of Santa Fe will be substantial and that means they will have to forgo use of their money for others purposes resulting in a diminution of the quality of life in the City. Speaking of project costs; At the time the EIS was initiated the project was estimated at \$60,000,000 now I read in the newspapers the cost will be \$120,000,000. <b>Has there been a new cost/benefit analysis?</b></p>	<p>} 13-1</p>	
<p>Table 27 on page 185 shows only 7.8% of the work force engaged in construction and that most of the economy is tied in some way to the arts and tourism. Table 25 on page 182 shows minimal growth in the City. In the middle of page 183 we read that while tourists are attracted to Santa Fe by its history and the arts we are in danger of losing that ambiance because of growth. The negative impact of growth that will be fostered by this project is ignored as is the burden of the construction and operating costs. <b>The EIS should not be accepted until these impacts are evaluated.</b></p>	<p>} 13-2</p>	
<p>I have some technical questions regarding engineering aspects of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ On pg 1- Under Purpose and Need- Previous City Consultants reported that the safe yield of the Buckman Well Field was 5,000 AF/Y</li> </ul>	<p>} 13-3</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ On pg 2- Under Public and Agency Involvement- What about effect of Aamott and San Juan/Navajo decisions and the uncertainty of the Feds commitment of San Juan/Chama water to the City and to the Jicarillas?</li> </ul>	<p>} 13-4</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ On pg 4- Other Surface Diversions- It was over 4 years ago that the County and the Tapwater Report suggested Pina Blanca as the point for diversion. It was again suggested in my letter of 9/0/02 [copy attached]. Both were rejected out of hand by the City's consultants because of "time considerations". And they still have not solved the sediment problem which would not have existed had they accepted the</li> </ul>	<p>} 13-5</p>	



**Comment  
Code**

Pina Blanca site. Also so as noted in my 9/2/02 letter it would have required less pipelining and the Forest Service would not have had to become involved!!

} **13-5  
Cont.**

On pg 5- Alternative technologies- Why was pumping river water all the way to treatment sites w/o sedimentation facilities thrown out? SF2 pumps part way. Consider the cost of trucking [how many truck loads a day? 4,5,or 6 up Buckman Road?] vs the periodic cost of replacing high head pumps. The sand problem has delayed the project for many months and is still not resolved.

} **13-6**

On pg 5- No Action Alternative- In so far as justifying this project is the goal the underlying reasoning is a gross distortion of the facts of the matter.

} **13-7**

On pg 5- Proposed Action- Since Buckman Road is to be improved for some reason why wasn't the concept of a small treatment plant next to the SF2 facility considered as a first step. This was proposed 20 years ago by the Metropolitan Water Board. The treated water could be pumped up through the existing pipeline and the Buckman wells rehabilitated at a much lower capital cost achieving the same goal for the residents of Santa Fe.

} **13-8**

◦ On page 7- Do the power alternatives anticipate that all well pumps will be operating at the same time that the new diversion pumps are all on line? How much of the cost of power upgrades is included in the \$120,000,000 project cost [current estimate]?

} **13-9**

  
T.C. Williams

T.C. Williams, P.E.  
Environmental Engineer (Retiree)

Consultant  
1204 LaRambla  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501  
505/984-2664  
9/2/02

Sandy Hurlocker, NEPA Coordinator USDA-FS  
Espanola Ranger District  
P.O. Box 3307  
Espanola, NM 87533

RE: My Comments on the Buckman Water Diversion Project

I attended the August 20th scoping meeting

\$60,000,000 for a project that will only meet our needs for 3 years after it is built!!! how many millions more will need to be spent to meet the needs after 2010??

The emphasis is on development of a sustainable supply but there is no mention of the fact that SJ/C water is not assured. We still do not have an agreement with the Feds that lasts beyond 2016 and no mention is made of the Silvery Minnow. There was a long article in the paper on Aug. 31st about the Rio Grande drying up. And no mention of the drought in the Colorado Basin and the fact that it has been over allocated.

I thought there were errors in the powerpoint presentation. I was told at the Aug. 20th scoping session that the powerpoint presentation would be available at [www.nm.blm.gov](http://www.nm.blm.gov). I have not been able to find it so cannot be specific.

In paragraph 2 of your letter announcing the scoping meeting the penultimate sentence includes the phrase "direct use of their existing water rights" and in paragraph 3 it says the County is in for 1,700 afy. They do not have that many afy of rights firmly in hand.

In paragraph 4 of your letter I read 37 miles of pipeline but in the report you sent me on August 8th, "Buckman Surface Diversion Project" dated Feb. 13, 2002 by CDM & CH2M Hill on page 2-2 the total miles is 40 miles. And in another report by CDM dated 10/31/01 in which they evaluate options for Buckman Diversion the total pipeline in the selected option [#6] they show 25.7 miles. The reason for bringing these inconsistencies up is that the Buckman Diversion was argued to require less pipelining than would be required if the diversion were at Pina Blanca as suggested almost 2 years ago. Now we see that the miles of pipeline are almost double that which would be required for Pina Blanca. Pina Blanca probably would not require a diversion structure intruding into the river. The water quality at Pina Blanca is such that sedimentation ponds would not be required and treatment would be easier as there would not be rapid changes in river water quality.

The last paragraph of page 1-1 of the "Buckman Surface Diversion Project" dated Feb. 13, 2002 by CDM & CH2M Hill reads " SJ/C diversion, conveyance, and treatment options for the City and County are described in the draft 'Feasibility Study and Recommendations for San Juan-Chama Water Diversion' (CDM, February 2002)". I have not been able to obtain a copy of this report as the City people say it is still only a draft. Therefore we do not know what the real

project is at this time. It seems to be a moving target. How can we know the environmental impact, let alone the economic impact on our community???

The new treatment plant is described as being a conventional rapid sand filter plant, similar to the existing Canyon Rd plant..

The Canyon Rd. plant needs to be upgraded we have been told. Just a little over a year ago the same City consultants said the Canyon plant capacity was 9.72 mgd now the City says it can only handle 4 mgd. Why not upgrade the existing Canyon plant to 12 mgd. then build the new pipeline all the way from Buckman to Nichols Reservoir. [12 mgd+5 mgd from Buckman wells+ 5 mgd from City wells = 22 mgd for peak days]. This would save some \$30,000,000 and a lot of surface disturbance for pipelines.

Apparently the Buckman wells are to be taken out of service. If so why are we spending millions on new Buckman wells and why are we not using the Buckman pipeline for transporting the surface water.

The pipeline and the treatment plant are designed to deliver 15 mgd. The size is justified in a CDM study by assuming that we get "0" water from the Canyon, "0" water from the Buckman wells and only 4.04 mgd from City Wells [ last week we pumped over 5 mgd from the City Wells]. It also assumes 1,700 afy wheeled to the County even tho they do not have water rights for that much.

Again from one of CDM's reports we see the operating cost per 1,000 gallons for City and County would be \$2.92. And when they include capital Santa Fe's share would be \$4.20 per 1000 gallons. We now sell water to existing residences for \$2.70 per 1000 gallons.

The CDM report assumes joint operation [City and County] but there is no agreement.

It seems to me that this project was planned for Las Campanas and the County. NOT for the citizens of Santa Fe. After all if we were not supplying Las Campanas and the County we would have enough even in drought times for the people who live here now with only a little bit of recycling.

Ted Williams

## Comment Responses

### 1. Bonnie Braganza, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6

- 1-1 The U.S. EPA classification of the Draft EIS proposed action as “LO” (Lack of Objections) and publication of the classification in the “Federal Register” has been noted.
- 1-2 The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Santa Fe National Forest will send the U.S. EPA Region 6 office one copy of the Final EIS at the same time that it is sent to the Office of Federal Activities (2251A), EPA, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20044.

### 2. Lisa Kirkpatrick, State of New Mexico Department of Game & Fish

- 2-1 The comment has been noted.
- 2-2 The Forest Service, BLM, and applicants will require the power line construction practices identified on page 65 of the Draft EIS.
- 2-3 The Forest Service and BLM will require that construction contractors follow all appropriate standards and guidelines for species known to occupy the project area. For a discussion of mitigation and monitoring measures for biological resources during the construction phase of the project, refer to pages 64-65 of the Draft EIS.
- 2-4 The comment has been noted. Native willow/cottonwood would be used as appropriate in the revegetation plan to be implemented once the diversion is in place.
- 2-5 The applicants will consider extending the area of control/eradication upstream and downstream, if feasible, to increase the likelihood of removal and replacement with native species at the diversion site.
- 2-6 The comment has been noted. In order to meet the “no net loss of habitat” requirement in the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958 (16 U.S.C. 661-667e), additional invasive plant control measures may be funded by the applicants, if authorized under a separate decision.
- 2-7 The comment has been noted. Mitigation measures provided as an attachment (trenching guidelines and others) will be incorporated as appropriate to the implementation plan.

### 3. Rolf Schmidt-Petersen, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

- 3-1 Language has been added in the “Project Operation and Maintenance” section of the Draft EIS beginning on page 47 to address the applicants’ coordination of reservoir releases with their diversion plans. The added discussion is as follows:

#### **Coordination and Accounting of Reservoir Releases and Diversions**

The City, County, and Las Campanas will work with the OSE, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), and Reclamation to develop a system for coordinating release of San Juan-Chama Project water in accordance with their needs for diversion of that water. The applicants recognize they must coordinate operations of the Buckman

Direct Diversion in order to ensure that the water diverted from the **Rio Grande is both** legally and physically available for diversion, is accurately measured, is appropriately reduced by officially recognized and applicable conveyance losses from upstream reservoirs, and is appropriately accounted against valid State of New Mexico water rights. The applicants recognize they must also comply with the applicable requirements of Federal laws governing reservoir operations, the contracts and operations requirements of reservoir owners and operators, and State Engineer water diversion permits.

The applicants will comply with all written conditions that the State Engineer from time to time may specify regarding the applicants' coordination and prior notice of planned changes in daily average diversions of San Juan-Chama Project water at the Buckman Direct Diversion in order to coordinate the associated river and reservoir operations. Through agreement with the involved Federal and State water management agencies, releases of San Juan-Chama water may be timed to coincide directly with water diversions through the Buckman Project. Alternately, an agreed arrangement for exchange and/or temporary storage may be used to alter reservoir release timing and create benefits for recreational or ecological purposes.

Conveyance losses as determined by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission or the Rio Grande Compact Commission will be subtracted from the amount of San Juan-Chama Project water released from Heron Reservoir or other upstream storage reservoirs containing the San Juan-Chama Project water to determine the remaining amount of San Juan-Chama Project water available for diversion at the Buckman Direct Diversion.

Prior to any diversion of water, the City, County, and Las Campanas will install accurate flow measurement and recording devices acceptable to the New Mexico State Engineer, or order to measure the net diversion of water from the Rio Grande. The net diversion of water is the total diversion of water minus the amount of flow immediately returned to the Rio Grande for the purposes of conveying diverted sand and sediment back to the river. The City, County, and Las Campanas also will establish a system acceptable to the State Engineer for daily accounting and periodic reporting to the State Engineer regarding all of the water and associated water rights diverted from the Rio Grande at the Buckman Direct Diversion. They will make the diversion and water rights accounting records periodically available to the public.

- 3-2 Language has been added in the "Project Operation and Maintenance" section of the Draft EIS beginning on page 47 to address the applicants' coordination of reservoir releases with their diversion plans. The relevant discussion is as follows:

Prior to any diversion of water, the City, County, and Las Campanas will install accurate flow measurement and recording devices acceptable to the New Mexico State Engineer, or order to measure the net diversion of water from the Rio Grande. The net diversion of water is the total diversion of water minus the amount of flow immediately returned to the Rio Grande for the purposes of conveying diverted sand and sediment back to the river. The City, County, and Las Campanas also will establish a system acceptable to the State Engineer for daily accounting and periodic reporting to the State Engineer regarding all of the water and associated water rights diverted from the Rio Grande at the Buckman Direct Diversion. They will make the diversion and water rights accounting records periodically available to the public.

- 3-3 The City of Santa Fe will limit its annual diversions of San Juan-Chama Project water to that amount it has available after the annual pumping impacts of the Buckman Well Field on the Rio Grande have been offset by San Juan-Chama Project water or by other water rights as provided in the Buckman Well Field permit issued by the Office of the State Engineer, subject to the agreement of the State Engineer.
- 3-4 The discussion of drawdown of the aquifer on page 1 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-5 The applicants expect to develop an annual operating plan for the State Engineer's approval describing the planned diversion operations and offsets pertinent for the plan year. The Buckman Direct Diversion is expected to have very little effect on downstream users. On average, the diversions will only total about 1 percent of the river flow. The applicants are not proposing any return flows directly to the Rio Grande. The City and County apportionment will be primarily water from the San Juan-Chama Project, as will be the apportionment for Las Campanas, at least initially. Diversion of San Juan-Chama Project water released from Heron Reservoir for use by a San Juan-Chama Project contractor or lessee does not impair any downstream water user or the Rio Grande Compact. Diversions of native Rio Grande water will be in accordance with the requirements of Office of the State Engineer diversion permits, which according to State of New Mexico water law, may not cause impairment of senior water rights. The applicants presume that State Engineer permit conditions of approval will obviate any impairment as defined under applicable New Mexico law.
- 3-6 The applicants expect that prior to diversion of any water they will develop a system of daily accounting of project diversions and associated water rights and will submit this information periodically to the Office of the State Engineer and post it on the Internet.
- 3-7 The applicants will design and install accurate flow measurement devices that will instantaneously measure the net diversions of water from the Rio Grande and will totalize the volumes of water diverted in a manner that is acceptable to the New Mexico State Engineer. Design details for the metering system will be developed following completion of the Final EIS. The applicants anticipate that diversion rates and volumes and water rights accounting information will be posted on the Internet periodically.
- 3-8 The paragraph is describing the possible variability of diversions from day-to-day and throughout the year and amplifies on the information provided in Table 3. It indicates that the average withdrawal rate over an entire year, expressed in cubic feet per second (cfs), could be as much as 12 cfs. On any given day, the withdrawal rate could vary from 0 to 28.2 cfs, the maximum capacity. During the 7 months from October through April, the maximum average withdrawal rate for a whole month is expected to be less than 70 percent of that maximum capacity. For example, the maximum monthly average diversion in October is expected to be 19.6 cfs, or just under 70 percent of 28.2 cfs. During most years, the average diversion in October would be less than 19.6 cfs. In December, the maximum monthly average diversion is expected to be 11.3 cfs, or about 40 percent of 28.2 cfs.
- 3-9 The required operating agreements among the applicants will include provisions for shortage sharing. Also, additional text and a new section has been added in the "Project Operation and Maintenance" section of the Draft EIS beginning on page 47. See response to comment 3-1 for the additional language.

- 3-10 The City has proposed to the State Engineer a State Engineer diversion permit condition that the City annually shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the State Engineer that it has legal control of sufficient San Juan-Chama Project contract water for annual delivery from Heron Reservoir, San Juan-Chama Project water in downstream reservoir storage, or other water rights to cover the City's planned operations during the subsequent calendar year. Planned operations include the following: (a) requirements for and availability of San Juan-Chama Project water or other native Rio Grande water rights to offset the Buckman Well Field depletion of the Rio Grande, (b) sufficient San Juan-Chama Project water for the City of Santa Fe's anticipated but discretionary storage or release of water by exchange from the Santa Fe River reservoirs when they are subject to Rio Grande Compact constraints under Article VII or Article VI pertaining to storage or release, respectively, of native water, and (c) sufficient San Juan-Chama Project water for diversion at the Buckman Direct Diversion.
- 3-11 The text on page 81 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-12 The text on page 81 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-13 The text on page 89 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-14 The text on page 90 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-15 Table 9 on page 91 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-16 The discussion of the low flow event on page 107 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-17 Please see response to comment 3-10.
- 3-18 The calculation was performed to illustrate that the effect on the equilibrium condition between sand suspended in the flow and sand in the bed would only change very slightly. The calculation was not based on any time period. However, under a sustained 1,000 cfs flow in the river, a slight adjustment in the bed could take place over a few hours after starting the diversion with the sand return. Because natural stream channels are in a constant state of change as they respond to variations in flows, such a small change would be nearly impossible to detect.
- 3-19 The statement on page 111 in the Draft EIS has been revised. The revised statement indicates that gradual releases of 5,605 acre-feet into and out of Abiquiu, when spread out over a year would affect surface elevation by only a few inches.
- 3-20 The discussion of drawdown of the aquifer on page 112 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.

- 3-21 Under the Proposed Action, production from the Buckman Well Field would be reduced to 1,000 acre-feet per year beginning in 2008 (page 118, Draft EIS). The recovery in the aquifer from reduced ground water pumping would have a beneficial effect on any domestic wells in the area in the near term.
- 3-22 The discussion on page 139 in the Draft EIS has been updated to incorporate the information provided in this comment.
- 3-23 There was an error in the last two columns of Table 15 of the Draft EIS in that the column heading was incorrect and the decimal points were omitted. For example, for January, the maximum native water diversion is estimated as 2.49 cfs, or 0.32 percent of the monthly average flow for January of 788 cfs, not 32 percent as indicated in the next to last column. Table 15 and the accompanying text have been corrected.

#### **4. Jessica Aberly, Esq., Pueblos of Tesuque and Pojoaque**

- 4-1 The DEIS did not consider the need to renew the San Juan-Chama (SJC) contract beyond 2016.

Renewal or conversion of repayment contracts is not an effect of the Proposed Action or alternatives.

Through court-ordered settlement negotiations for the *Aamodt* (Pojoaque River Basin) adjudication, the pueblos and other parties in the Pojoaque River Basin (including the Pueblos of San Ildefonso and Nambe) have been working cooperatively to arrive at a settlement of the pueblos' water rights claims. In their comments on the Buckman Project DEIS, the pueblos state that the Proposed Action will affect their rights to surface and ground water resources. They state that an "indirect effect" or "reasonably foreseeable" action resulting from Buckman Project construction is renewal or conversion of the City and County of Santa Fe's SJC Project water service contract. The pueblos state "that a renewed or converted San Juan-Chama Project allocation contract approved by the BOR to benefit the City and County and by extension via leasing, Las Campanas is a reasonably foreseeable action" and that the DEIS "fails to address or analyze this key indirect effect, the need for a new approved SJC Project allocation contract, be it a renewal of the water service contract or conversion to a new repayment contract."

Renewal of the City and County's water service contract or converting it into repayment contracts is not part of the Proposed Action in this DEIS. Nor is such renewal or conversion an indirect effect or foreseeable result of the Proposed Action in this DEIS. The Proposed Action here is "the construction and operation of the Buckman Project on public lands managed by the Forest Service and BLM, and Santa Fe County...constructed with the capacity necessary to meet the City's and County's near-term needs for water through the year 2010." [DEIS page 2] The City and County's current water service contract does not expire until 2016. Therefore, no *new* contract is required to deliver water out of the SJC Project and into the Buckman Diversion facility as anticipated in the Proposed Action.

Further, renewal of the City and County's water service contract, or conversion into separate or joint repayment contracts, is not an "indirect effect" of the Proposed Action nor is it a "reasonably foreseeable" result of the Proposed Action. Once completed, the Buckman Project will be used to deliver the City and County's SJC water to the City and



County (and this DEIS contemplates such use until 2010). Reclamation has already entered into a contract with the City and County of Santa Fe for water service deliveries out of the SJC Project. Most important, the conversion or renewal of that contract is not dependent on the Buckman Project's completion.

4-2 Renewal of SJC Project water contracts was not adequately discussed in the DEIS.

At the SJC Project contractors' request, Reclamation is in the initial stages of negotiating conversion of six of the remaining San Juan-Chama Project water service contracts<sup>2</sup> into repayment contracts.<sup>3</sup> Contract conversions are anticipated for the following entities: the City of Santa Fe, the County of Santa Fe, County of Las Alamos, City of Española, Town of Taos, Village of Los Lunas, and Village of Taos Ski Valley.

Pursuant to NEPA, Reclamation prepared an environmental assessment on the San Juan-Chama contract amendments for the above named entities. The FONSI, issued in May 2006, supported the proposed conversion of long-term water service contracts into repayment contracts. Reclamation law authorizes conversion of individual water service contracts into repayment contracts, and the contracts themselves anticipate contract renewal.<sup>4</sup> The pueblos were provided an opportunity to comment on the contract conversion during the NEPA process *for that Proposed Action*.

The pueblos commented that Reclamation has a flawed underlying assumption "that the City and County of Santa Fe have a perpetual right to the full amount of city/county current SJC Project water supply." That issue is not related to the Proposed Action of constructing the Buckman Project with capacity to meet the City and County's water needs through 2010. Again, this issue should be addressed during the NEPA process for contract conversions themselves. NEPA does not require agencies to consider alternatives that do not achieve the purpose of the Proposed Action. Therefore, Reclamation is not required to analyze alternatives that would alter the amount of water distributed by SJC Project contracts or the use and delivery of SJC Project contract water. These are not within the scope of the Proposed Action, and such alternate analyses could not even be considered "alternatives" to the action.

4-3 The DEIS fails to discuss the effects of the project on Indian Trust Assets (ITAs)

Effects on Indian Trust Assets are discussed in the DEIS. The discussion has been augmented in the FEIS for clarity as noted in the following paragraphs.

Indian Trust Assets (ITAs) are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individuals. Examples of possible trust assets include lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. The United States has a trust responsibility to

<sup>2</sup> Executed pursuant to subsection 9(c)(2) of the Reclamation Project Act of 1939, P.L. 76-260, 53 Stat. 1194, codified at 43 U.S.C. §485h (the 1939 Act).

<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to subsection 9(c)(2) of the 1939 Act.

<sup>4</sup> Act of June 21, 1963, P.L. 88-44 §§1-4, 77 Stat. 68 (the 1963 Act).

protect rights reserved by or granted to Indian tribes or individual Indians. This trust responsibility requires Federal agencies to take appropriate action when necessary to protect trust assets.

The pueblos' comments on the Buckman Project state that the Federal action agencies have a "fiduciary duty to substantively address the effects of the Proposed Action on the protection of the water rights of the pueblos...The pueblos have significant rights to both surface and ground water resources and the Federal agencies' fiduciary duty to protect tribal rights and resources includes these water rights." The pueblos also state that the government, as trustee, has a substantive obligation to mitigate adverse impacts to the trust assets belonging to Indian nations as part of the duty to protect these resources as required by law.

The general policy of the Department of the Interior is to carry out activities in a manner that protects ITAs and avoids adverse effects whenever possible. See, e.g., Reclamation Indian Trust Asset Policy, July 2, 1993.

In order to clarify these relationships and responsibilities, the discussion of impacts on ITAs in the FEIS has been changed as described below.

First, the DEIS states that the Proposed Action (construction of the Buckman Project) does not affect ITAs. Given that there is no pueblo water right directly and adversely affected by construction of the Buckman Project, the action agencies did not identify ITAs affected by the Proposed Action. However, simply because no pueblo water rights are directly and adversely affected by construction of the Buckman Project does not mean that pueblo water rights to native waters in the Rio Grande Basin might not be affected by the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action might actually have a beneficial effect on the pueblos' water rights within the basin by potentially reducing the use of the Buckman well field. As noted in the DEIS on pages 116-117 ("Ground Water Impacts") the Proposed Action would lead to less use of native water (from the underground aquifer), and thus reduce the impacts that such use might have on the pueblos' water rights. The FEIS reflects this beneficial effect, noting that "less reliance on ground water for local water supplies would have a beneficial effect on the ground water and surface water resources of pueblos within the basin." <sup>5</sup> Conversely, the No Action Alternative has more potential to affect pueblo water rights in the Rio Grande Basin as ground water use continues.

Finally, the pueblos' comments suggest that the USFS and BLM need to analyze impacts of the Buckman Project on potential use of SJC Project contract water to meet the pueblos' water rights. This comment assumes that the Buckman Project will not go forward without a renewal or conversion of the City and County's SJC contract (which as noted in response to 4-1, is not the case). The pueblos also state that renewal or conversion of these contracts will impact the pueblos' ability to attempt to secure that water for their own use at some future time. This comment goes beyond the scope of the current Proposed Action—construction of the Buckman Project. The pueblos' concern about the future, speculative use of SJC Project water does not implicate an ITA that is adversely affected by construction and operation of the Buckman Project.

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<sup>5</sup> Pueblo water rights in the basin can be satisfied from either surface or ground water sources.

## 5. Joni Arends, Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety

- 5-1 Although officials have the authority to extend the comment period (FSH 1909.15 at section 23.4); in reviewing your request against the record, it has been concluded that an extension is not appropriate.

First, although time was short, you had a week to review the documents provided to your office on February 7, 2005. Although the issue of the missing pages is unfortunate, the lead agencies could have remedied the error if we had known about them the delivery week, rather than Feb. 14, 2005, when you brought the issue to our attention.

Second, you have implied that a period of 2 years had passed between the time you asked for these documents and the time they were provided. This is simply not the case. You had requested information that Walter Hines (CH2MHill consultant) used during the project site field trip in October 2002. Chuck Pergler (Tetra Tech Deputy Project Manager) attempted to provide you with this information but there was some confusion about the exact document you needed, and as Mr. Pergler noted in his conversation records (Oct. 17, 2002 and Dec. 12, 2002), you were invited in to review all documents in the record in December of 2002.

In both instances, Tetra Tech made every reasonable effort to provide you the information in a timely way. Therefore, the lead agencies do not believe an extension is justified.

- 5-2 The impact of Los Alamos National Laboratory on water quality in terms of Federal drinking water quality standards was considered speculative. Contaminant transport is closely related to the Cerro Grande Fire's destabilizing effect resulting in increased flooding with higher rates of sediment transport. Although mostly legacy contaminants from Los Alamos National Laboratory are periodically transported and stored in bank forming sediments of Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 East and P-4 West, the contaminant transport is closely associated with increased flooding in Pueblo Canyon and it is expected that contaminant transport will diminish as flood frequencies and intensities diminish as the watershed returns to a more normal condition. In addition, the NMED DOE Oversight Bureau made recommendations to the agencies involved in Cerro Grande Fire impacts in both "Post Cerro Grande Fire Channel Morphology in Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 West: and Storm Water Transport of Plutonium 239/240 in Suspended Sediments" by Dave Englert, Ralph Ford-Schmid, and Kenny Bransford published in October 2004, and "Post Cerro Grande Fire Stream Channel Morphology in Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 East" by Ralph Ford-Schmid and Dave Englert published in January 2004. The recommendations include environmental restoration which would help return Lower Pueblo Canyon to a more natural condition effectively locking contaminants in sediment units that are not as vulnerable to erosion.

In addition, the applicants will test and treat all water from the diversion site to Federal drinking water quality standards. In addition, water quality data that was reviewed for this analysis does not indicate that there would be any problem with treatment of diverted water to Federal drinking water quality standards for distribution within the City, County, or Las Campanas distribution systems.

- 5-3 As stated on page 3 of "Analysis of Capture Zones of the Buckman Wellfield and a Proposed Horizontal Collector Well North of the Otowi Bridge" by Velimir V. Vesselinov

and Elizabeth H. Keating published in May of 2002, at steady state, the predicted relative proportions of water extracted at Buckman are 27 percent from the Rio Grande and the Pojoaque Rivers, 34 percent - western basin, including the Pajarito Plateau, and 39 percent - eastern basin. Of the water originating in the west, most is recharged at high elevations, outside the LANL boundaries, but flows through the regional aquifer beneath the laboratory. The same study also simulated the advective-dispersive ground water transport of hypothetical nonreactive, nondecaying, aqueous species from the water table at five locations in the vicinity of LANL. The hypothetical sources at the water table are assumed to be permanent in time with a constant concentration. The mean advective-dispersive travel times to Buckman (defined by the arrival of half of the respective highest concentrations) are on the order of thousands of years. However, ground water from these five water table locations in the vicinity of LANL will also be captured by the Los Alamos water supply wells on the Pajarito Plateau; more importantly, the dilution is less, and travel times are shorter compared to those for Buckman.

- 5-4 Comment noted.
- 5-5 The references cited will be reviewed and included in the project record as they prove relevant to the decision framework. As appropriate, the lead agencies will consider this information and determine if changes to the Final EIS will be necessary.
- 5-6 Following review of the documents presented in comment number 5-5, the lead agencies will determine if a discussion of potential impacts from LANL is warranted and necessary to include in the analysis for the Final EIS.
- 5-7 A review copy of the Draft EIS was available at all public libraries in Santa Fe, the Los Alamos Public Library, the Española Public Library, and on both the Forest Service and BLM Web sites for download. Additionally, the Forest Service/BLM building on Rodeo Road in Santa Fe also had a review copy in their reading room and a few extra copies to handout to interested parties. Also, the BLM Taos Field Office had copies of the Draft EIS for review and distribution. Furthermore, the City and County were each provided with 20 copies of the Draft EIS and the Summary of the Draft EIS to distribute to their governing bodies. Upon completion of the Final EIS, the Española and Santa Fe City Councils will be notified of its availability.
- 5-8 The notice of availability of the Draft EIS for the Buckman Project was published in the “Federal Register” under the U.S. EPA section of Volume 69, No. 242 on Friday, December 17, 2004. In addition, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Department of Agriculture also had a published announcement in the same Volume 69, No. 242 of the “Federal Register” on Friday, December 17, 2004. Furthermore, two display ads were run in the Santa Fe New Mexican on Thursday, January 20, 2005 and Monday, January 24, 2005. Moreover, postcards were distributed to individuals on the mailing list who wished to be notified of future project developments. In the future, the lead agencies will consider distribution of any public service announcements in English and Spanish to radio stations in Santa Fe, including KSWV and KSFR, and in Espanola, KDCE.
- 5-9 As presented on page 23 of the Draft EIS, tribal consultation was initiated for preparation of the Draft EIS. In addition, any followup consultation that occurs with tribal entities that express an interest in the Draft EIS will be included in the Final EIS. The lead agencies

- followed all legal obligations for consultation under NEPA. All appropriate tribal governments received copies of the Draft EIS. The lead agencies will consider consultation with recognized land grant holders.
- 5-10 The lead agencies considered the inclusion of a glossary; however, an attempt to use language that is easily understood by the general public was the approach. As a result, terms used in the Draft EIS have been defined in the body of the text.
- 5-11 Comment noted.
- 5-12 The location of Los Alamos National Laboratory has been added to Figure 1 (Draft EIS, page 8). In addition, Los Alamos National Laboratory has been added to Figure 2 (Draft EIS, page 18).
- 5-13 It is not relevant to include the boundaries of the Aamodt settlement until formal conclusion of the adjudication process.
- 5-14 In Chapter 1, page 19 of the Draft EIS in the “Overview of Proposed Project” section, near-term is bounded as the time period from current through the year 2010.
- 5-15 The actual cost of the diversion and all related infrastructure related to the Buckman Project has not yet been accurately determined. The cost of specific infrastructure is partially dependent on the price of materials (steel for pipelines) and its availability on the open market. The final cost will not be determined until the final design has been completed and specific infrastructure can be priced based on current market value.
- 5-16 The statement that water conservation measures alone would not meet the purpose and need is based on water management. Although water conservation is a necessary component of overall water management, it simply does not provide additional new water supply. Conservation measures are already an integral part of the applicants’ water management strategy. The most important thing to understand is that during times of water shortage, additional water supply would still be necessary. Therefore, water management alone would not meet the purpose and need of the project. The City and County are working together to develop a strategy to meet the long-term water demands of their constituents. Recycling wastewater and adopting smart growth restrictions may be part of the City and County’s long-term water management strategy, along with different locations for diversions and other water management options, including water conservation.
- 5-17 The elimination of the San Ildefonso site for diversion of water for the applicants is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, page 29 of the Draft EIS. Originally, because the system of horizontal collector wells from the demonstration project were diverting water from beneath the surface of the river, it was believed that the water quality might be high enough to minimize or avoid treatment altogether. However, preliminary water quality data returned from the demonstration project indicates that some level of treatment of the produced water would be required to meet Federal drinking water quality standards. Also, 6.5 miles of additional pipeline in addition to the pipelines needed for the Proposed Action or its alternatives would be required to convey the water to the Buckman waterline ROW near Buckman Booster Station 2. The additional 6.5 miles of water pipeline would require crossing lands administered by the San Ildefonso Pueblo, BLM, State, and private lands. For all these reasons, a diversion at San Ildefonso Pueblo would not meet the schedule

- requirements. The City is evaluating the potential for diversion of water at San Ildefonso Pueblo as part of their long-term water planning initiative. A separate EIS is planned to meet long-term water supply needs, and San Ildefonso may be a part of this future EIS.
- 5-18 Chapter 2, page 51 of the Draft EIS states that the system would not be able to operate at full capacity when river flows are below about 200 cfs and would need to shut down when river flows are below about 150 cfs. Therefore, the diversion system could not divert 14 percent of the Rio Grande's flow during low flow events.
- 5-19 The City and County water use is a function of projected population growth through 2010. Table 25 on page 182 of the Draft EIS presents a projected population growth of 22.7 percent for Santa Fe County and 2.0 percent for the City. It is important to note that the water demand projection referenced shows an upper demand estimate for 2010. This projection is realistic in that any projection is speculative and it is far safer to estimate a worst-case scenario than an unrealistic lower demand projection.
- 5-20 The near-term planning horizon for this project is through 2010. Population projections for the County are presented in Table 25 on page 182 of the Draft EIS. Also, the projected water demand for 2010 incorporates this increase for the Community College District. Additionally, the City and County are working together to develop a strategy to meet long-term water demands of their constituents (through 2050). Recycling wastewater and adopting smart growth restrictions may be part of the City and County's long-term water management strategy, along with different locations for diversions and other water management options.
- 5-21 The text in Figure 3 on page 20 of the Draft EIS shows termination of the proposed City/County treated water pipeline as the proposed connection to the existing County water line. No additional changes will be required for the Final EIS.
- 5-22 Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS provides a detailed discussion of environmental consequences from the Buckman Project on water quality, quantity, waste generation, storage, and disposal. If Alternative SF2 is chosen, the coarse sediment removed will be trucked to the Caja del Rio landfill. The life of the landfill would not be significantly affected by the disposal of sediment (2-3 truck loads per day). Currently, 150-200 loads per day (ranging in sizes) are disposed of at the Caja del Rio landfill. In many cases, the sediment could be used as cover or grading to aid the landfill managers in covering layers of refuse to minimize exposure.
- 5-23 The diversion would result in less reliance on ground water for local water supplies by allowing diversion of surface supplies rather than pumping the Buckman Well Field and depending on infiltration of ground water to recharge the aquifer below the Buckman wells. The beneficial nature of a surface diversion comes from the reduced reliance on ground water (Buckman Well Field) to meet demands for water. Once operational, the diversion would allow the City to scale back pumping of the Buckman Well Field to approximately 1,000 acre-feet per year, significantly less than is currently being pumped (See Table 11 on page 116 of the Draft EIS and discussion of "Environmental Consequences" to ground water, pages 113-117). This reduced pumping would allow the aquifer below the Buckman Well Field to rebound and provide a more sustainable and reliable source for future ground water withdrawal.

- 5-24 The proposed diversion project does not include plans to discharge to the Santa Fe River.
- 5-25 A cultural resource survey was conducted for all lands within both corridors, staging areas, diversion site, and sedimentation facility sites. The findings of the cultural survey and a number of mitigations for the potential discovery of cultural artifacts buried beneath the surface has been compiled and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO will need to sign off on mitigations or recovery of any impacted sites.
- 5-26 During the construction phase of the project, all Federal labor laws will be complied with. However, purchase of materials is outside the authority of the lead agencies and will not be regulated.
- 5-27 The location of meters to monitor the flow of water through pipelines and booster stations will be established once a final design has been developed. The City, County, and Las Campanas also will establish a system acceptable to the State Engineer for daily accounting and periodic reporting to the State Engineer regarding all of the water and associated water rights diverted from the Rio Grande at the Buckman Direct Diversion. They will make the diversion and water rights accounting records periodically available to the public.
- 5-28 Table 10 shows an estimated “*average*” monthly diversion for December is 7.7 cfs; whereas, table 3 shows an expected “*maximum*” monthly diversion for December is 11.3 cfs. These data are correct.
- 5-29 If the diversion facility is shut off during a period of low flow in the Rio Grande, the entire system will go offline. The water treatment plant would also go offline because it would not be receiving water from the diversion to treat. Once adequate flows returned to the river, the diversion facility and treatment plant would come back online. In order to handle this scenario, the appropriate engineering would be designed into all infrastructure during final design.
- 5-30 The facility associated with Alternative SF2 would be protected by appropriate trespass abatement devices similar to those protecting the existing booster stations or well houses. As noted on page 38 of the Draft EIS, all booster station sites would be surrounded with permanent chain link fence. In addition, the sediment facility as part of Alternative SF2 is directly adjacent to existing Booster Station 1 and will also be surrounded with permanent chain link fence.
- 5-31 Due to the different scales used in production of each map, a single orientation would not effectively display all necessary infrastructure and attributes for the given alternative. The scales within each map, and the orientation of the north arrow are sufficient for complete understanding related to either alternative.
- 5-32 Page 54 of the Draft EIS provides the number of truck trips referenced in this comment.
- 5-33 The historical impacts to the Denver & Rio Grande railroad grade do not lend to the complete understanding of the proposed project. Cultural surveys completed specifically for this project have identified potential artifacts and sites associated with this railroad grade and impacts to the railroad grade from project related actions will be avoided or mitigated with data recovery as discussed on pages 65-66 of the Draft EIS.

- 5-34 Figures 18, Treated Water Pipeline Alternatives and Figure 19, Location of Power Upgrade Facilities for Proposed Action and Alternative AGP1 will be printed in color in the Final EIS.
- 5-35 There is no public process for commenting on implementation plans. The implementation plan document will be used to implement the measures outlined in this EIS process, as well as best management practices (BMPs) and any other applicable guidance not specifically mentioned in the Final EIS.
- 5-36 On page 66 of the Draft EIS under “Recreational Resources,” the method of notifying the public of potential access encounters and delays is presented.
- 5-37 The method of locating flood zones was inspection of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Flood Insurance Rate Map. Based on the flood zone any particular facility falls within, the probability of flood occurrence is established.
- 5-38 Graphic simulations of historic architecture are not considered necessary in the context of this planning process.
- 5-39 To clarify, citations of specific technical reports used to conduct analysis have been added to the “References Cited” section of the Final EIS.
- 5-40 Table 13 on page 130 of the Draft EIS has a column header called “Fish.” This is sufficient to meet the request to include aquatic life to this table; therefore, no additional changes to Table 13 are necessary.

## **6. John R. Buchser, Sierra Club, Northern Group, Rio Grande Chapter**

- 6-1 Although extraordinary sediment transport events can occur from thunderstorm activities, this form of climatic event is typically confined to the monsoon season in northern New Mexico. In addition, during the monsoon season, the demand for water is typically reduced based on the surplus that tends to fall from thunderstorm events. Also, extraordinary sediment pulses from surrounding arroyos tend to move through fairly quickly (within several hours or a day) and, therefore, the sediment load within the Rio Grande would return to a more normal condition quickly. Canada Ancha, the most substantial arroyo in the area discharges just downstream of the proposed diversion facility. The threshold of sediment that would require short-term termination of operation of the diversion facility would be established during final design of all infrastructure associated with this project. In order to limit diversion of water during an extraordinary sediment transport event, the diversion facility would be shut down until sediment levels dropped below the threshold and normal operation could resume. During final design, specific operating procedures would be developed to address this specific issue.
- 6-2 Typically, 100-year flood events occur during spring runoff or during mid-summer thunderstorm activity. Additionally, the presence of flood control structures (dams) upstream on the Rio Chama limit the likelihood of a 100-year flood event beginning far upstream. As a result, the risk of discharge of pollutants into the Rio Grande from a 100-year flood event that occurs during construction of the cofferdam or diversion facility will be limited, where practical, by placing the cofferdam for the approximate 5 month



construction schedule during periods of low flow in summer and autumn, when the risk of a 100-year flood event is minimal.

Text added to the Draft EIS page 64, “Water Resources” section, “Construction Phase” subsection is as follows:

In addition, the cofferdam is projected to be in place for about 5 months during periods of low flow in summer and autumn.

Text added to the Draft EIS page 105, “Direct and Indirect Effects of the Proposed Action” section, “Construction Effects” subsection is as follows:

In addition, the cofferdam would be placed during periods of low flow in summer and autumn.

Also, the history of flows within the Rio Grande are known and will be used to build a cofferdam that would be resistant to flood flows of similar magnitude as those known to have historically occurred.

- 6-3 The sediment separation facilities, under all sediment facility alternatives, are not located within the 100-year flood plain of the Rio Grande or nearby arroyos. Therefore, the sediment facilities would not be at risk from a 100-year flood.
- 6-4 The controls on growth or water use by the City and County is not within the scope of analysis for this EIS.
- 6-5 The lead agencies cannot endorse specific consultants; therefore, the comment has been passed on to the applicants. The lead agencies support the goals to minimize erosive impacts and restore natural processes.
- 6-6 If it is economically feasible for the applicants to find other uses for the sand removed at the sedimentation facility, they most likely will. In addition, at low flows, there is expected to be very little sand in the diverted water.
- 6-7 Both the City and County already have growth management components in their existing ordinances.

The development of water budgets and water reuse strategies are being considered by the City and County; however, their development is outside the scope of this project.

- 6-8 The ultimate application and use of water that has been obtained through diversion of a legal water right is not within the scope of this project.

## **7. Alonzo Gallegos, Caja del Rio La Majada Livestock Association**

- 7-1 The project is expected to have a beneficial effect on livestock wells in the area. The addition of a surface diversion will reduce the City's dependence on the existing Buckman Well Field. Ground water modeling discussed on page 116 of the Draft EIS indicates that reduced pumping from these wells would allow a gradual rebound of ground water levels and a shrinking of the cone of depression around the well field.
- 7-2 Because the Buckman Project affects the Rio Grande, not the Santa Fe River basin, there is no connection between the surface water diversion proposed at the Buckman site and the Caja del Rio allotment. However, the applicants have agreed to work with the Livestock Association to satisfy its need for water as a separate agreement not associated with the Buckman Water Diversion project.

## **8. Brian Shields, Amigos Bravos, Friends of the Wild Rivers**

- 8-1 Your request for an extension of the comment period by 30 days, stating that 60 days is not enough time to prepare a thorough analysis of the document has been denied. Although responsible officials have the authority to extend the comment period (FSH 1909.15 at section 23.4); in reviewing your request against the record, the lead agencies do not conclude that an extension is appropriate.

The lead agencies elected a 60-day period because of the Bureau of Reclamation's experience with complex water projects and the need to provide time for comment. A standard review period of Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management draft EIS documents is 45 days, and so we have noted your concern with the complexity.

Because the comment period meets policy requirements and because the agencies believe your organization had ample time to review the Draft EIS, an extension is not deemed appropriate.

- 8-2 During normal proposed operation conditions of the diversion facility, the Buckman Well Field will only be pumped at a rate of approximately 1,000 acre-feet per year (Draft EIS pages 116-118 and Table 12). During times of extreme drought, the diversion facility will be used to its feasible diversion volume based on instream flow (Draft EIS Chapter 2, page 51). However, during extreme drought, the Buckman Well Field may be pumped in excess of 1,000 acre-feet per year to provide the additional water to offset demands. The diversion facility would simply reduce the applicants' dependence on ground water resources of the Buckman Well Field allowing the aquifer to gradually rebound coupled with a decrease in the extent of the cone of depression (Draft EIS Chapter 3, page 116).
- 8-3 The alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS are designed to provide the decision makers with an analysis of the tradeoffs associated with various ways of meeting the project's purpose, which is stated in the Draft EIS (pages 29 and 30). Many alternatives (additional ground water pumping; other surface water diversions in the San Ildefonso, Caja del Rio, Cochiti Lake, and Peña Blanca areas; water conservation; and alternative technologies) were considered but eliminated from detailed study because they would not meet the stated purpose and immediate near-term need for a sustainable means of accessing water supplies for the applicants (see pages 29 and 30 of the Draft EIS). The Buckman Project is designed to meet near-term needs. The City and County are working together to develop a strategy to meet the long-term water demands of their constituents. In addition, recycling wastewater

and adopting smart growth restrictions may be part of the City and County’s long-term water management strategy, along with different locations for diversions and other water management options. A separate analysis is planned to meet long-term water supply needs. In addition, the City has held an interagency meeting and a public meeting to present 18 separate alternatives for supplying water to meet long-term demands.

- 8-4 The draft EIS was prepared in accordance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act, as amended (1973) [16 USC 1531 et seq.]. The lead agencies have conducted technical interchanges with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concerning the proposed project. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences - Special Status Species,” no federally listed threatened or endangered species would be adversely affected by the Proposed Action. In addition to the EIS analysis, the FS has prepared a biological assessment (BA) to address potential issues associated with special status species. Only one currently listed threatened or endangered species is known to incidentally occur within the proposed project area and vicinity as a wintering migrant, the bald eagle (Draft EIS page 141). Mitigation measures to avoid adverse impacts to this species are included in the Draft EIS and BA, which will be attached to the Final EIS. The USFWS has no record of any other federally listed threatened or endangered species occurring within the project area or vicinity, nor are there any immediate USFWS plans to reintroduce any of these species (e.g. silvery minnow) upstream of Cochiti Lake.
- 8-5 The lead agencies and Tetra Tech evaluated the White Rock Canyon segment of the Rio Grande from Buckman Road to Cochiti Lake using the BLM Handbook for Wild and Scenic River Management. It was determined that this reach did not meet the eligibility criteria for “free flowing” or the criteria for at least one outstandingly remarkable value. Those values should be at least regionally or nationally significant.
- 8-6 As noted in the Draft EIS, habitat fragmentation will not occur with the proposed diversion of water from the Rio Grande. The Draft EIS does address the cumulative effects of other water diversion projects that contribute to the dewatering of the Rio Grande (see pages 81-83 of the Draft EIS). In addition, the actions proposed for this project do not significantly contribute to habitat fragmentation. Furthermore, most of the infrastructure required to implement this project would be sited within existing rights-of-way that do not extend to the river ecosystem. Where the diversion extends to the river, effects of construction and operation have been discussed in detail. A discussion of cumulative effects of past habitat fragmentation from construction of dams and dewatering of the river ecosystem upstream is not within the scope of this project.
- 8-7 The Buckman Project will not result in negative effects to water quality in the Rio Grande. The impact of Los Alamos National Laboratory on water quality in terms of Federal drinking water quality standards was considered speculative. Contaminant transport is closely related to the Cerro Grande Fire’s destabilizing effect resulting in increased flooding with higher rates of sediment transport. Although mostly legacy contaminants from Los Alamos National Laboratory are periodically transported and stored in bank forming sediments of Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 East and P-4 West, the contaminant transport is closely associated with increased flooding in Pueblo Canyon and it is expected that contaminant transport will diminish as flood frequencies and intensities diminish as the watershed returns to a more normal condition. In addition, the NMED DOE Oversight Bureau made recommendations to the agencies involved in Cerro Grande Fire

impacts in both “Post Cerro Grande Fire Channel Morphology in Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 West: and Storm Water Transport of Plutonium 239/240 in Suspended Sediments” by Dave Englert, Ralph Ford-Schmid, and Kenny Bransford published in October 2004, and “Post Cerro Grande Fire Stream Channel Morphology in Lower Pueblo Canyon, Reach P-4 East” by Ralph Ford-Schmid and Dave Englert published in January 2004. The recommendations include environmental restoration which would help return Lower Pueblo Canyon to a more natural condition effectively locking contaminants in sediment units that are not as vulnerable to erosion.

In addition, the applicants will test and treat all water from the diversion site to Federal drinking water quality standards. In addition, water quality data that was reviewed for this analysis does not indicate that there would be any problem with treatment of diverted water to Federal drinking water quality standards for distribution within the City, County, or Las Campanas distribution systems.

- 8-8 U.S. Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations) directs Federal agencies to assess whether the Proposed Action or alternatives would have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. Having a water supply for the entire region is considered beneficial for all populations and income levels. Furthermore, the impact analysis did not indicate there would be disproportionate effects to minority or low-income populations. In fact, areas of disturbance associated with several facilities including booster stations, water treatment plants, pipelines, and power upgrade facilities would be located adjacent to Las Campanas.
- 8-9 Amigos Bravos was not sent a hard copy of the Draft EIS; rather, they were sent a postcard announcing the availability of the Draft EIS. Specifically, Ernest Atencio, a member of Amigos Bravos received a postcard at the Amigos Bravos P.O. Box number in Taos, but was not signed up to receive a copy of the Draft EIS. Another postcard was returned from the Amigos Bravos Tesuque office. A review copy of the Draft EIS was available at all public libraries in Santa Fe, the Los Alamos Public Library, the Española Public Library, and on both the Forest Service and BLM Web sites. Additionally, the Forest Service/BLM building on Rodeo Road in Santa Fe also had a review copy in their reading room and copies to hand out to interested parties who requested one. Also, the BLM office in Taos had copies of the Draft EIS for review and distribution. Furthermore, the City and County were each provided with 20 copies of the Draft EIS and the Summary of the Draft EIS to distribute to their governing bodies.

## **9. Joe D. Auburg**

- 9-1 The purpose and need is discussed on pages 17-19 of the Draft EIS. The Proposed Action and alternatives, including alternatives considered but eliminated from further study, are discussed in detail on pages 29-59 of the Draft EIS. In addition, see response to comment 8-3.

## **10. Jack Carpenter**

- 10-1 The term “gage” is most commonly used by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to describe stations established to measure streamflow. Therefore, the USGS term gage will continue to be used in this analysis.

- 10-2 The word “engineer” will be replaced with the word “engineering.”
- 10-3 The citation (Tierra Lopezgarcia Group, 2004) will be added to the end of that paragraph following “segment as shown in Figure 14.”
- 10-4 The major heading of this discussion is “Proposed Action.” In the paragraph in question, there is mention of trucking the sediment out under other alternatives under the “Sediment Separation Facility Alternative.” However, within this section of the document, the proposed method of handling the sediment is to return it to the river. The return of sediment to the river is based on issuance of a Federal NPDES discharge permit and a state certification of the NPDES discharge permit. If these permits cannot be obtained, the other alternatives discussed in the “Sediment Separation Facility Alternatives” section would be required (see comment 6-7).
- 10-5 A more detailed discussion of the effects of selecting the No Action Alternative on social and economic resources is presented on page 187 of the Draft EIS. Without selection of an action alternative, population growth and dynamics, as well as housing growth, would be constrained. All of these effects would result from limited water resources.
- 10-6 Low income refers to a community in which 25 percent or more of the population is characterized as living in poverty, as determined by statistical poverty thresholds used by the United States. In Santa Fe County, 11.9 percent of the population is below the poverty threshold. Therefore, the “Environmental Justice” effects are accurate in this analysis.
- 10-7 Jemez y Sangre 2001 provided a summary of surface water quality in the region based on several sources of data, including general information about the three-county Jemez y Sangre planning area, and more specific information about the Rio Grande in the vicinity of the proposed diversion. Jemez y Sangre 2001 is cited several times on page 96 and is the primary source for all water quality information on this page.
- 10-8 The word “shale” will be changed to “stable” to be compatible with the Santa Fe National Forest Management Indicator Species Assessment from 2003, referenced as (FS 2003) in the Draft EIS.
- 10-9 The timing of construction of Buckman Road improvements and construction of the diversion facility would be concurrent to the extent practical. The specific construction schedule will be developed as part of the final design and construction plan for project related infrastructure.
- 10-10 The BLM uses the Visual Management System (VMS). Although the Forest Plan was written using the VMS system, the Forest Service has since been directed to use the Scenery Management System (SMS). The analysis of scenic/visual resources in the Draft EIS was written to apply to all these systems to satisfy both BLM and Forest Service scenic/visual standards and guidelines. Therefore, the “Scenic Resources” section will not be rewritten to incorporate an older system of scenic resources assessment.
- 10-11 The signage that will be used along improved portions of Buckman Road will be established during final design of project infrastructure.

10-12 A cultural resource survey was conducted for all lands within both corridors, staging areas, diversion site, and sedimentation facility site. The findings of the cultural survey and a variety of mitigations for the potential discovery of cultural artifacts buried beneath the surface has been compiled and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO will need to sign off on mitigations or recovery of any historical artifacts found during construction of the proposed facilities and infrastructure. In addition, all major facilities and infrastructure will be sited in locations that will either avoid known surface concentrations or documented cultural sites, or be mitigated through data recovery or other means after consultation with the SHPO. In the event that subsurface artifacts are located during construction, appropriate mitigations will be adhered to (Draft EIS pages 65-66, “Cultural Resources” section).

10-13 The Farmington BLM noise guidelines are cited in the noise analysis because the BLM is a participating agency in the project. However, as noted in the text, the noise threshold used by the Farmington BLM office for evaluating and determining noise impacts is considered equivalent to the noise thresholds established by several other Federal agencies with specific noise criteria, including the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Federal Highway Administration. These agencies have developed land use compatibility guidelines for evaluating noise conditions under the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise (FICUN). These guidelines establish a baseline Yearly Day-Night Average Sound Level of 65 decibels for determining noise impacts at land uses such as parks, residences and recreational areas. This value was used as a basis for evaluating the potential noise impacts of the Buckman Project. Based on the analysis conducted for the project, Day-Night Average Sound Levels will not exceed 65 decibels at the fence line of any proposed booster station (Draft EIS page 174).

The Draft EIS acknowledges effects to wildlife from noise generated by project related infrastructure (Draft EIS page 125, “Wildlife” section, “Operation Effects” subsection).

10-14 As part of the Proposed Action, the Buckman Well Field would be rested significantly compared to current pumping levels (approximately 1,000 acre-feet per year). The reduced pumping of the well field would likely limit the continued displacement of the fault structure, if it is related to subsidence from over pumping of the well field. However, this project would not have significant effects on geology resources; therefore, the additional information would not establish additional understanding of effects from the action alternatives.

10-15 The proposed Buckman Project would be entirely constructed within the County of Santa Fe. Social and economic data that was used in support of the analysis was gathered from referenced sources to build a picture of the social and economic setting. Further refinement beyond that used in this analysis is unnecessary because of the limited effects this project would have on social and economic resources under the action alternatives. County level data was used in this analysis because facilities are dispersed over a wide area throughout the County (over 15 miles of pipeline). Furthermore, many facilities (booster stations, power upgrade facilities, pipelines, and water treatment plants) are adjacent to some of the highest income populations in the County. Also, much of the infrastructure would be sited on public lands and/or within existing rights-of-way.

- 10-16 Low income refers to a community in which 25 percent or more of the population is characterized as living in poverty, as determined by statistical poverty thresholds used by the United States. In Santa Fe County, 11.9 percent of the population is below the poverty threshold. County level data was used in this analysis because facilities are dispersed over a wide area throughout the County (over 15 miles of pipeline). Furthermore, many facilities (booster stations, power upgrade facilities, pipelines, and water treatment plants) are adjacent to some of the highest income populations in the County. Also, much of the infrastructure would be sited on public lands and/or within existing rights-of-way.
- 10-17 At any time during a project, specific files from the project record can be made available. In addition, a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request can be made to obtain any additional information that is being requested. In the Draft EIS, references are made to specific information collected from reports, surveys, and studies at the end of the paragraph or introduced as the source at the beginning of the paragraph or section. Regulation and policy do not require that the project record index be included in the Final EIS as an appendix or attachment. Information that was used in preparation of the Draft EIS is cited in the “References Cited” section.
- 10-18 Reasons other alternatives were considered but eliminated from further study are described in the Draft EIS on page 29. Alternatives SF1 and SF2 were developed and analyzed to provide a viable means to avoid the Buckman townsite (Draft EIS pages 51-52).
- 10-19 Alternatives SF1 and SF2 were developed and analyzed to provide a viable means to avoid the Buckman townsite (Draft EIS pages 51-52).

## **11. Alan R. Jager**

- 11-1 As stated on page 29 of the Draft EIS, “Other surface diversion sites were considered; however, primarily because of time considerations, they would not meet the purpose and need for the project, which includes a critical and immediate need for increased water supplies.” In addition, the applicants would need to obtain easements to store water on private property around Abiquiu Reservoir as the City of Albuquerque has done if this diversion location was chosen, which would slow implementation and not meet the purpose and need for the project. Also, the City, as part of their long-term water supply initiative, is looking into the feasibility, cost, and issues associated with diversion of water directly from Abiquiu Reservoir.
- 11-2 The discussion of the possible benefits of the Abiquiu Reservoir diversion alternative are noted; however, as stated on page 29 of the Draft EIS, “Other surface diversion sites were considered; however, primarily because of time considerations, they would not meet the purpose and need for the project, which includes a critical and immediate need for increased water supplies.”
- 11-3 See response to comments 11-1.

## **12. David O. Quintana**

- 12-1 The only sediment returned to the river would be sand and coarser materials separated by a mechanical process that would not involve chemicals. As indicated in the Draft EIS, only

very slight local changes in the bed elevation immediately downstream of the diversion are expected as a result of this process.

- 12-2 Revegetation will not include salt cedar. The focus of revegetation efforts will be on replacing disturbed areas with native species, not invasive species. Migratory birds are discussed on page 121 of the Draft EIS and environmental consequences to them associated with the power upgrades are discussed on page 126. Additional discussion of migratory birds is provided in the “Special Status Plants and Animals” section of the Draft EIS that begins on page 141 and continues through page 144. Mitigations created for biological resources are presented on pages 64-65 of the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS states that a pre-construction survey for avian fauna protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would be conducted at the water diversion site along the Rio Grande, booster station and water treatment plant locations, and the selected pipeline routes. Depending upon the survey data, a mitigation plan would be developed at that time and specific mitigations, if any, would be based on the survey findings.

Lichens have not been specifically addressed, but disturbance to vegetation is discussed. Generally, construction will be confined to utility corridors that are already disturbed, and to localized areas near the river and at the MRC. Because of these construction limitations, it is unlikely that there would be significant impacts to lichen populations.

- 12-3 As indicated in Figure 34 on page 109 of the Draft EIS, the average annual diversion will be more like 0.8 to 1.4 percent of the average flow in the river. This includes water diverted for all applicants; which would be mostly made up of nonnative San Juan-Chama water.
- 12-4 The Draft EIS includes an evaluation of the effect on river flows from diversions up to 8,730 acre-feet per year. However, the facility cannot be operated at that capacity until some additional rights are procured. When additional rights are procured, some other effects may occur that would need to be evaluated at that time before any changes in water rights could be approved by the Office of the State Engineer.
- 12-5 The map showing Las Campanas Drive will be reviewed and updated as necessary to show any additional paving. Upgrades to Buckman Road are discussed throughout the Draft EIS. The amount of truck traffic that would be involved with hauling sediment on existing paved roads is not expected to create unnecessary wear and tear and would not decrease the service life of the pavement.
- 12-6 Effects of road improvements on user-day visits are discussed in the “Recreation Resources and Traffic” section of the Draft EIS that begins on page 152. Indirect effects of possible increases in usage of the Buckman and Dead Dog Leg corridors and surrounding land are discussed on page 157, “Operation Effects” of the Draft EIS.
- 12-7 Please see the response to comment 12-6. In addition to the discussion in the “Recreation Resources and Traffic” section from pages 152 through 161 of the Draft EIS; effects on “Scenic Resources” are discussed on pages 161 through 171 of the Draft EIS.

### **13. Ted C. Williams, BSCE, PE, DEE, PSB**

- 13-1 The actual cost of the diversion and all related infrastructure as part of the Buckman Project has not yet been accurately determined. The cost of specific infrastructure is partially



dependent on the price of materials (steel in the pipelines) and its availability on the open market. In addition, the entire cost of the diversion project would not effectively be absorbed by the applicants' constituents. Therefore, the applicants will need to work toward appropriating the necessary funds or Federal assistance to successfully construct the necessary infrastructure. The Draft EIS does, however, discuss the impact on the local social and economic resources, in that, if the diversion is not constructed, water shortages would constrain population growth and dynamics as well as housing growth. Also, the constituent's ways of life would be affected due to limited water resources. Furthermore, construction and tourism-oriented industries would lose jobs and gross receipts tax revenues would decrease from reduced construction of new homes, which would lead to an increase in property tax revenues (Draft EIS page 187, "Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative").

- 13-2 A more detailed discussion of the environmental consequences of this project on social and economic resources is presented on pages 187 through 189 of the Draft EIS. Without selection of an action alternative, population growth and dynamics as well as housing growth would be constrained. The project is designed to meet needs through 2010; therefore, future growth would still be moderately to tightly limited because of water availability. Implementation of this project would not result in uncontrolled growth and negative effects from that growth. Growth occurs in nearly every community and only becomes problematic when it is allowed to go unchecked. Water resources are the primary check on population within the project area. Additionally, Table 25 on page 182 of the Draft EIS only shows a projected 2 percent increase in population within the City of Santa Fe from the 2000 census through 2010. A projected population growth of 2 percent is relatively flat and would not have negative effects on tourism, history, or the arts. For responses to the burden of construction and operating costs, see responses to comments 10-5 and 13-1.
- 13-3 The sustainable yield of the Buckman Well Field has not been specifically determined. Several reports and studies have tried to determine the connectivity of the aquifer beneath the Buckman Well Field to the surface water system of the Rio Grande; however, no consensus has been reached. In addition, the Buckman Well Field has consistently experienced reduced yields, especially during drought years. The reduced yield condition will only worsen if the City is forced to rely on the Buckman Well Field for much of its water supply. The water right for pumping of the Buckman Well Field is 10,000 acre-feet per year, provided sufficient offsetting water is released from storage upstream. However, this yield has never been achieved from the Buckman Well Field and yields consistently decline. Furthermore, even if the Buckman Well Field was pumped at a rate of 10,000 acre-feet per year, the water produced would still fall short of meeting future demands during drought years.
- 13-4 The Aamodt water-rights adjudication was filed in 1966 to quantify, prioritize and determine ownership of water rights in the Nambe, Pojoaque, and Tesuque River drainage basins north of Santa Fe. The delivery of San Juan-Chama water to the City, County, or Las Campanas would not rely on any of these drainages for conveyance. Additionally, the Aamodt suit has been litigated for 39 years and the proposed settlement of February 5, 2004 is still being appealed by people on an individual basis. Regardless, the Aamodt

settlement would not affect this project; therefore, discussion of the litigation has been left out of the Draft EIS.

The City of Santa Fe is currently dependent on the use of San Juan-Chama water for their water supply. The Buckman Well Field is pumped with the requirement that water withdrawn is offset by water released down the Rio Grande. Currently, that offsetting water is San Juan-Chama water. The proposed diversion is simply an attempt by the applicants to transfer dependence from ground water aquifer sources (Buckman Well Field) to surface water sources. The applicants will still have the ability to pump additional water from the Buckman Well Field; however, if the shortage-sharing of San Juan-Chama water is implemented by the Bureau of Reclamation, the applicants will suffer regardless. The diversion would rest the aquifer and allow it to rebound, which would provide additional water during drought if necessary.

- 13-5 The Peña Blanca site was considered but eliminated from further study because it would not meet the stated purpose and immediate near-term need for a sustainable means of accessing water supplied for the applicants (Draft EIS page 30). In order to implement a diversion at Peña Blanca, approximately 14 miles of new water pipeline right-of-way would be required to tie into the City's southern water distribution system. The diversion facilities would need to be located on private lands, and the water pipeline would cross and require new ROWs on FS, BLM, and private lands. Substantial modifications would also be necessary to the City's water distribution system. Therefore, the Peña Blanca alternative was not considered a viable short-term solution. The City and County are working together to develop a strategy to meet the long-term water demands of their constituents. In addition, recycling wastewater and adopting smart growth restrictions may be part of the City and County's long-term water management strategy, along with different locations for diversions and other water management options. A separate EIS is planned to meet long-term water supply needs. In addition, the City has held an interagency meeting and a public meeting to present 18 separate alternatives for supplying water to meet long-term demands. The Peña Blanca site is one of the 18 alternatives being evaluated to meet long-term demands.
- 13-6 Under Alternative SF2, two to three truck trips per day would be required to remove the dried sand from the sedimentation pond system. Additionally, even if the sediment was not removed near the river, the coarse material would still need to be removed prior to treatment of the water to Federal drinking water quality standards. Either way, a sedimentation facility would be required and trucks would still need to move the sediment from the sediment pond systems near the MRC water treatment plant site and Las Campanas water treatment sites to the Caja del Rio landfill. The cost of locating sedimentation facilities at two sites, and trucking dried sand from two sites, along with the additional corrosion and scour of high head pumps and other infrastructure makes this option unrealistic and prohibitively costly.
- 13-7 It is true that the Buckman Well Field would not provide a reliable and sustainable source of water due to declining well yields, substantial reductions in ground water levels near the well field, and potential limitations to pumping due to depletion of nearby streams. The applicants would be forced to seek other means to access their water rights in a manner that would be more sustainable and reliable. Thus, they would likely turn to other methods of

diverting surface water to meet their near-term need, while also developing long-term water supply and management strategies.

- 13-8 Buckman Road is proposed for improvement to facilitate trucking sediment out of the sedimentation pond system safer and more achievable. In addition, movement of materials for construction of the raw water pipeline would be more easily and safely achieved. Placement of the water treatment plant at a location next to the sedimentation facility would require additional infrastructure near the river in an area that is more sensitive to disturbance. In addition, the applicants do not own land at that location and locating facilities on FS or BLM lands would require additional approvals. Furthermore, the existing pipeline connected to the Buckman Well Field would not be able to support the volume of water from both the diversion and the well field at the same time. The well field would require major design modifications and a larger diameter pipeline would need to be installed to achieve this scenario.
- 13-9 Preliminary estimates from PNM indicate that the power loads associated with the Buckman Project would accelerate the need for planned power upgrades in the area. Any power upgrade alternative would be constructed to meet the power needs of the entire service area regardless of which facilities are operational. In addition, the cost of power upgrades would be incurred by PNM, as PNM would be able to recover the cost of necessary infrastructure in the sale of electricity to power applicant metered facilities.



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