

## District purchases Wildlife Drinkers for new Cochiti development

Story and photo by Champe Green, Senior Ecologist, District Environmental Resources Section

Not all wildlife on Cochiti Pueblo has the luxury of daily trips to Cochiti Reservoir or the Rio Grande watering holes to wet their whistle. However, the introduction of wildlife drinkers remote from perennial water sources can improve the availability of water for wildlife throughout the year.

Drinkers are often installed on arid landscapes for the purposes of increasing wildlife numbers and expanding the use of habitat. The Albuquerque District recently purchased two 3,500 gallon wildlife drinkers for Pueblo of Cochiti Department of Natural Resources, as mitigation for partial habitat loss associated with new campground facilities at Cochiti Lake.

The drinkers were custom made for the Corps by Williams Windmills Inc. of Lemitar, New Mexico, a supplier of wildlife drinkers to federal, state and private land managers throughout the state. Upon taking delivery

of the drinkers, Tribal members constructed the first drinker at a remote upland site on the Pueblo in

collects precipitation that falls on approximately 531 square feet of sheet metal fins, then water drains into a 3,500 gallon covered stainless steel tank. Stored water is then gravity fed through an underground pipe to a float-controlled, walk-down drinker anchored in the ground, where critters from amphibians and reptiles to birds and small mammals to elk, deer, and bear can sip a cool drink.

Jacob Pecos, Director of Cochiti Department of Natural Resources, led the team from Cochiti Pueblo during construction. Corps personnel involved in the mitigation assistance to the Pueblo were Mike Martinez, Civil Works Project Manager, Environmental Studies Unit Ecologist Champe Green, Cultural Resources Unit Archaeologists Greg Everhart and Lance Lundquist, and Craig Lykins at

the Cochiti Project Office. Retired Corps employee Dick Kreiner, now with Tetra Tech, provided invaluable technical assistance.



***In the foreground, tribal members of Cochiti Pueblo, a Corps contractor, and former Corps employee Dick Kreiner install the plumbing for a drinker box in February. The galvanized drinker box holds several gallons of water available for drinking by wildlife. In the background workers install the metal catchment fins on the 3500 gallon storage tank. The catchment fins intercept precipitation and funnel it into the storage tank.***

February.

A second drinker will be constructed at another remote location when back country two-track roads become passable. Each drinker