

## **Comments from URGWOPS Public Scoping Meeting; Albuquerque, New Mexico, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, August 17, 2000**

Following is a summary of the questions, comments, and issues raised during the discussion that followed the formal presentation on the purpose and objectives of the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) at the scoping meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Other comments made to technical team representatives after the formal presentation are listed at the end of these notes.

*/?/Comment.* Why was El Vado not included in the scope of this EIS?

*/?/Comment.* How will the Review address prior and paramount Indian water rights? This is unclear and partly incorrect in one of the water operations fact sheets.

*/?/Comment.* What are the effects on Indian water rights other than the prior and paramount water rights?

*/?/Comment.* Why are the facilities of irrigation districts and acequias not included for consideration of changes to their operations?

*/?/Comment.* In formulating the alternatives for the EIS, are you willing to look at changing water diversions and the effect of changing irrigation district diversions?

*/?/Comment.* How does an agency become a cooperating agency?

*/?/Comment.* It is unusual to have joint lead agencies as co-leads. What assurance do we have that the Records of Decision (ROD) that are issued will not conflict with each other, and that there will be decisions made to cooperatively implement the selected alternative? Why didn't you plan to issue only one ROD?

*/?/Comment.* The Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly works with federal, state, and local agencies and can incorporate public input related to all of those agencies. The Water Operations Review could use the Water Assembly's participants for getting public input, and work together for public outreach.

*/?/Comment.* In developing the alternatives, how do the lead agencies work outside their funding agreements and enabling acts for making changes to operations? Can you request changes to be made by Congress?

*/?/Comment.* Most of the public is not aware of what is an existing authority and what is outside the scope of this project.

*/?/Comment.* Will you be considering ways to reduce evaporative losses in the system?

*/?/Comment.* How can you do what is needed to regenerate cottonwoods in the Bosque through periodic flooding when parts of the system have new construction in the floodplain? The new buildings built in the floodplain in the Socorro area and the railroad bridge at San Marcial provide constraints to water operations changes that will be difficult to overcome.

**Comments from the flip charts, recorded by technical team representatives:**

- Can Regional Water Plans be posted on ISC web site once submitted to the ISC?

**Comments made to the Riparian and Wetland Ecosystems Technical Team**

- Need to do salt cedar clearing.
- Bosque flooding—ecosystem health.
- Flow alternatives vs. ecosystem processes and land-water interface.
- Use creative engineering to divert flows throughout the levee system to enhance cottonwood regeneration.
- For NM Game and Fish—Rio Grande silvery minnow predators?
- Bovine encroachment in riparian areas
- How many days will overbank flooding last? 24 hours? 30-40 days?
- Get communities to appreciate how rare the Bosque really is.
- Trash will be increased and mobilized, including deceased animals, when flooding is released.