

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Public Scoping Meeting; Chama, New Mexico; El Mesón Lodge; August 9, 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 Chama, New Mexico.

/?/Comment. Will this project affect the adjudication process?

/?/Comment. Does the project not deal with acequia and tribal issues?

/?/Comment. Tribes can do what ever they want to do.

/?/Comment. Most people in northern New Mexico cannot access the Internet. How can they learn about the project and keep up to date with its status and decisions? The lead agencies should have done a better job of getting the word out so more people from the community would attend this meeting and learn about the Water Operations Review and EIS.

/?/Comment. Agency representatives should talk to schools to teach the students the value of our resources. Bilingual information would also help to get the word out about the project. Other recommendations included setting up an exhibit at public functions like Chama Days and the Albuquerque Arts and Crafts Fair.

/?/Comment. People are tired of attending meetings and of not having the host agencies really hear their concerns.

/?/Comment. In response to a proposed change in the surface water area of Abiquiu Reservoir several years ago, a landowners' group formed and was effective in conveying their concerns to the Corps of Engineers. They were directly affected by the proposal and persistent in providing input to the Corps. People can get organized and make the agencies listen to them. In this project, it sounds like the agencies are asking for input at the beginning.

/?/Comment. El Vado and Abiquiu reservoirs are the "bread and butter" of northern New Mexico. This year these reservoirs are being drained. The local people would like to know when this will stop and why they were not notified that this would happen. People should realize that draining the storage water from the upper reservoirs has an immediate effect on the local groundwater. Maybe water operations are damaging the river right now.

/?/Comment. Why must the Rio Grande silvery minnow be protected? How will that affect the process?

/?/Comment. How strong is the regulatory authority of the agencies involved? There is a situation in the Chama area involving the use of pesticides that poisoned the surface water, yet the state departments of Agriculture, Game and Fish, and Environment would do nothing about it. Can the joint lead agencies control these state agencies so they will stop this problem?

/?/Comment. Is breaching dams, as some agencies are doing in the northwest U.S., an option being considered or is it possible to consider?

/?/Comment. One person heard that Texas wants to store water in Abiquiu Reservoir.

/?/Comment. It was recommended that a committee be formed in each community to provide input on the project. Who is on the Steering Committee?

/?/Comment. Can the general public make recommendations to the Steering Committee?

/?/Comment. Can the public recommend members to the Steering Committee?

/?/Comment. Are cultural concerns required to be addressed by law?

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?/Comment. The group expressed concerns that northern New Mexico rural communities do not have the political clout, population, and money to have their comments carry weight when the agencies select alternative water operations. They also wanted to make sure that the alternatives selected would be equitable and would not harm their part of the basin.

?/Comment. Will there be a risk-benefit assessment?