

Comments from URGWOPS Public Scoping Meeting; Socorro, New Mexico; Macey Center, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology; October 18, 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 Socorro, New Mexico. They are presented in the order they were discussed.

/?/Comment. Will URGWOM have scenarios that will analyze the impacts of removing some diversion dams?

/?/Comment. Does removal of structures “mess up” this study if they are removed after the study is complete?

/?/Comment. Is the City of Albuquerque’s use of San Juan-Chama water part of this study?

/?/Comment. In the Socorro County Commission, we have discussed and supported construction of a dike on the west side, across from Bosque del Apache. The Commissioners have heard that this project has been cancelled, and they would like to state that with the construction of Elephant Butte, there has been significant damage to communities upstream along the river. Important cultural resources have been destroyed. The County Commissioners are concerned about what will happen to the remaining communities, like San Acacia and Socorro, if there is no protection from flooding.

/?/Comment. I am surprised that the USGS is not involved in this project.

/?/Comment. As a farmer, I am pessimistic about public involvement. Past experience with Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) public meetings on wolves and threatened and endangered species has shown that FWS has the ultimate authority for the Endangered Species Act and can rule any way it wants. Public involvement justifies what FWS or other government agencies want to do. How do you intend to work around the FWS trying to keep the lead agencies from doing anything under the Water Operations Review?

/?/Comment. On flood control projects—the Socorro County Commissioners received a letter accepting their application for a flood control project. With three lead agencies in the Water Operations Review, it would be beneficial to the commissioners to request support from these lead agencies.

/?/Comment. Will you be addressing noxious weeds? Perennial pepperweed is a serious problem where there has been earthmoving. Please contact the Socorro Soil and Water Conservation District for more information.

/?/Comment. Can we get a complete list of all agencies involved in the Water Operations Review?

/?/Comment. The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission has spent money supporting the development of regional water plans. Will these plans be incorporated into the Water Operations Review? A comprehensive plan cannot be developed without incorporating the regional water plans.

/?/Comment. The Socorro/Sierra Regional Water Planning group is directed by a steering committee that is composed of representatives of different water users in the community. We have quarterly meetings and coordinate closely with the NMISC. We hope that all input from the community in prioritizing how water is used becomes part of the Water Operations Review so that our issues and needs are established for this reach without duplicating efforts.

/?/Comment. Water in New Mexico is too valuable to run down the river for a few minnows when the minnow is so easy to raise in other locations.