



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

For immediate release
Tuesday, May 25, 2004

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces \$12.5 million Available for New Mexico water projects

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson announced today that the New Mexico Finance Authority approved more than \$12.5 million for vital water projects statewide.

“I’m making good on my promise to prioritize the money we spend on community projects - dedicating more money to crucial water projects around the state,” Governor Richardson said. “With help from the Legislature, under the leadership of House Speaker Ben Lujan, communities across the state will benefit from this money. The Water Trust Board and New Mexico Finance Authority immediately put this money to use and will allow progress to begin without delay.”

The Finance Authority approved eight grants. Three grants were awarded for watershed restoration and management projects in critical recharge areas. They are designed to increase water availability and supply. The following projects were approved:

1. Claunch Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District: **\$556,200** for the second phase of its watershed restoration project for the Estancia Basin watershed.
2. San Francisco Soil & Water Conservation District: **\$232,970** to restore native vegetation on the banks of the Whitewater Creek in Catron County.
3. Ute Creek Soil & Water Conservation District: **\$328,270** to eradicate about 842 acres of salt cedar along the Ute Creek and its tributaries in eastern New Mexico.

“These watershed restoration projects help flows of water,” said State Engineer John R. D’Antonio, Jr., Chairman of the Water Trust Board. “One mature salt cedar can absorb approximately 200 gallons of water per day; that is water that the State cannot afford to waste.”

The Finance Authority also approved five regional water projects totaling more than \$11.4 million, including:

1. City of Bloomfield: **\$1,046,583** for its *Agua Para los* regional water project that connects approximately 23,500 water users in San Juan County. The project originated due to the drought, which found many communities in San Juan County with dangerously low water reserves. As a result, Bloomfield, Aztec and seven community water systems have regionalized.
2. City of Española: **\$3,708,000** for a regional water distribution center which is designed to serve the needs of the Española Valley encompassing the communities of Chimayo, San Juan Pueblo, Santa Clara Pueblo, and Arroyo Seco.
3. City of Gallup: **\$2,583,366** to build a regional water infrastructure system from Gallup’s west-side system northward and will connect the Twin Lakes Chapter of the Navajo Nation. This project is a piece of the Navajo-Gallup regional water supply project.
4. City of Santa Fe: **\$3,380,954** for its regional Buckman Direct Surface Diversion project. This three-year, \$100 million regional project will utilize San Juan-Chama water.
5. Town of Taos: **\$695,250** to complete a \$3.2 million water improvement project. The project includes upgrades to infrastructure, the water distribution system and develops the diversion of San Juan-Chama water.

The Finance Authority Board also approved a **\$400,000 grant** to the Doña Ana Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association for its \$3.1 million regional water and wastewater system improvement project. The project will increase the capacity of its sewer collection and water distribution systems. This is a collaborative project with the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County.

“This community’s promotion of regional cooperation is to be commended,” said Stephen Flance, Chairman of the Board of Directors. “The water and sewer needs in New Mexico are immense, while funding is limited. Projects like this in northern Doña Ana County build upon community needs and design a regional solution that provides needed water and sewer services.”