

2006 Legislative Session Results – Is Water a Priority in the Year of the Child?

Jean Witherspoon

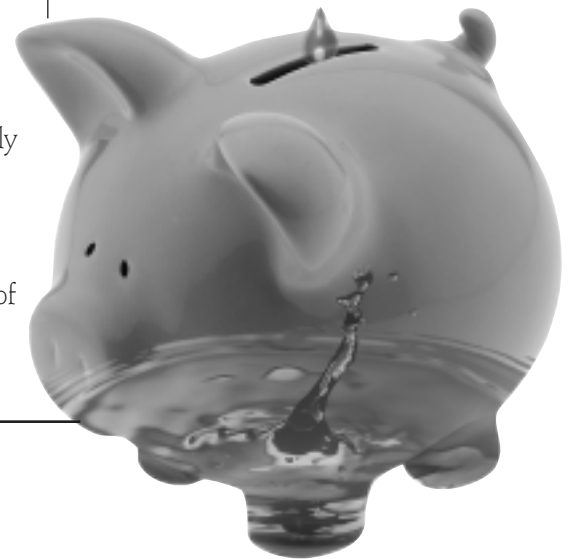
The short 2006 Legislative Session ended on February 16. The Governor has until March 17 to sign bills into law. The short session largely deals with fiscal issues, so the majority of the water-related bills were appropriations bills.

Probably the most significant and successful objective was to make the Water Trust Fund work. A number of bills proposed appropriations to the Fund; the one that eventually passed appropriated \$28 million. Annual amounts will then be put into the Water Project Fund for the Board to allocate to projects around the state.

Proposed bills that didn't pass include:

- 1) House Bill 703 (Roberto Gonzales) to create a tax credit up to \$1,500 for new, eligible alternative liquid waste disposal systems;
- 2) Senate Bill 608 (Michael Sanchez) to appropriate \$125,000 to the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly for web applications;
- 3) House Bill 84 (Rhonda King) to appropriate \$50,000 to begin Torrance County implementation of the Estancia Basin regional water plan; and

- 4) House Bill 565 (Brian Moore) to appropriate \$5 million to the ISC to purchase water rights from willing sellers for the strategic water reserve.



National water conservation organization becomes a reality

Last May the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC) held a series of workshops exploring stakeholder interest in a national water-use efficiency organization. The proposal was met with interest, and on December 12, 2005, the EPA announced that the Alliance for Water Efficiency, a national clearinghouse and advocate for water efficiency research, evaluation and education, will be headquartered in Chicago.

“Wise water use means more than just turning off a dripping faucet.”

—Stephen L. Johnson

Chicago was chosen in response to stakeholder comments that the headquarters should be central, an airport hub, close to Washington DC to allow easy access to beltway meetings, and should allow Canadian participation.

Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, announced the formation of the new organization at the Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Summit, observing “Wise water use means more than just turning off a dripping faucet. Water efficiency is a smart, cost-effective solution to the quality and supply challenges facing one

of our nation’s most precious natural resources.”

Mary Ann Dickinson, Executive Director of the CUWCC, added “We are delighted we could work with stakeholders nationwide to develop the goals and programs for a new national organization focused on water efficiency. There is extraordinary interest from a wide variety of groups...to pull together a program of water efficiency options that will benefit the nation as a whole.”

Information on the new organization can be found at http://www.cuwcc.org/national_cwe.lasso.

Public Speaks on Bernalillo County Conservation

Kerry Bassore

Bernalillo County recently held five public meetings to present the draft water conservation plan for unincorporated areas of the County. A total of 190 people attended the meetings. Participants reviewed a list of 64 measures being considered. They were given 5 green stickers and 5 red stickers and asked to place green stickers next to the most preferred measures and red stickers next to their least preferred measures. To follow are the water conservation measures that received the most red and green stickers. This public input will help the County prioritize water conservation measures for implementation within the water conservation plan. Other factors that will be considered in setting priorities include: possible water saved, resource requirements, equity, available budget, and cost effectiveness.

5 Most favored Measures

1. Implement irrigation system standards for existing golf courses, athletic fields, golf courses and new development (excepting single family residential).
2. Implement water budgets for County and private golf courses, and to all County-owned parks and athletic fields
3. Time-of-day restrictions on watering with spray-irrigation.
4. Implement design regulations for conservation on new County facilities, golf courses and new development in unincorporated area.
5. Agricultural incentives — promote value-added crops — small business incubator, conversion to more valuable crops, ditch lining, laser leveling fields

5 Least Favored Measures

1. Implementation of an ordinance requiring retrofit on resale or remodel of low flow devices on remodels that require a plumbing permit.
2. Require a meter for those who have four instances of water waste violations.
3. Enforce the landscaping ratio requiring that a maximum of 80% of the landscaped area be in high-water use plants, with at least 20% in low water use plants.
4. Implement existing Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority ordinances
5. Require conservation measures for homes over certain sizes, starting at 2,500 square feet

PioneerWest Goes on Sabbatical to the Far East!

Susan Gorman and Blair Brown, as PioneerWest, have managed the Middle Rio Grande and Santa Fe Water Festivals since 1999. They are turning the responsibility for these festivals over to Katie Babuska and her new firm Experiential EE in order to embark on a sabbatical trip around the world, from March through mid-May 2006, traveling from New Mexico to Frankfurt, Germany, and then on to India, Thailand and China.

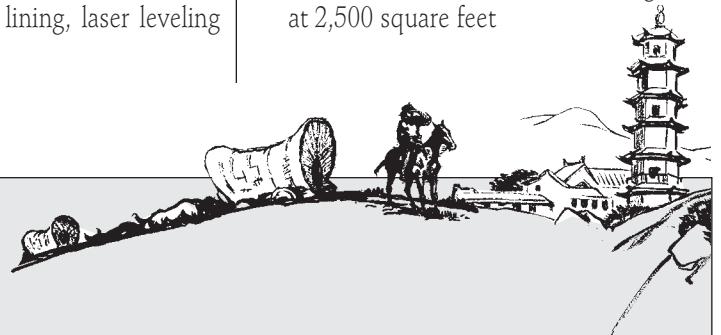
Gorman and Brown look to expand their understanding of life and culture in South Asia and China by visiting the museums, monuments and archaeological sites and

experiencing local environments, rural and urban areas, indigenous plants and animals, wildlife and natural habitats and attending performances of native music and dance. They will also be observing urban planning and development practices in each place in order to document practices that make cities better places for people to live.

Katie Babuska began as a volunteer presenter at the Middle Rio Grande Children's Water Festival some years ago. She was impressed with the quality of the event and Susan's level of organization, and began contracting with PioneerWest in November 2004, and has helped coor-

dinate three Water Festivals since then. Katie welcomes the opportunity, beginning with the Middle Rio Grande Water Festival coming up in October, to use her management skills and passion for K-12 environmental education to keep the Children's Water Festival programs in the Middle Rio Grande and Santa Fe areas appropriately funded, of highest quality and running smoothly. Barbara Garrity and Wendy Tanner will continue on the Water Festival team as well.

For information on participating in a Children's Water Festival contact: Katie Babuska, ExperientialEE, k_babuska@hotmail.com, 505.975.0036



NMWCA Meetings 2006

Regular meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday every other month in Albuquerque at 555 Broadway, NE from 1 to 4 pm (unless otherwise noted):

May 11, 2006, Albuquerque

July 13, 2006, Gallup site
and time to be announced

Sept 14, 2006, Albuquerque

Nov 9, 2006, Ruidoso site
and time to be announced

Jan 11, 2007, Albuquerque

All meeting dates and times are subject to change. Please look for e-mail announcements or check the Alliance web page, <http://wri.nmsu.edu/wrdis/nmwca/alliance.html>.

Executive Board Meetings

Executive board meeting are held on Mondays from 3 to 5 pm at Richard Chapman's Bed and Breakfast at 1211 Roma, NW in Albuquerque.

April 10, June 12, Aug 14,
Oct 16, and Dec 11.

Welcome Officers

Katherine Yuhas, President
Cheri Vogel, Vice President
Christy Smith, Secretary
Lonnie Burke, Treasurer
Richard Chapman takes on the role of past President

JOIN THE ALLIANCE

Name

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Organization

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E-mail

Membership Fee Schedule:

- \$25 Individuals
- \$250 Corporations, Associations and Governmental Agencies

Your name will be added to the Alliance membership and you will automatically be placed on the *Conservation Current* mailing list. You are also welcome to attend Alliance meetings, for which times and locations are posted at <http://wri.nmsu.edu/>.

Please send this form, along with your membership fee, to:
New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance
369 Montezuma Avenue, #149
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 1-800-WATER-NM

News

April 20, 2006, 3:00 - 4:30 pm
The NOAA Climate Assessment for the Southwest: Research on Southwest Drought and Water Resources

Dr. Gregg Garfin, CLIMAS, Climate Assessment for the Southwest. Gerald Thomas Auditorium, NMSU, Las Cruces

This lecture is part of the Spring 2006 Water Lecture Series Presented by the College of Agriculture Water Task Force, NMSU Civil Engineering Department, and Water Resource Research Institute

NMOSE's brochures go Spanish

Two of the NMOSE's brochures *Agua Action* and *Rainwater Harvesting*, have been translated into Spanish; They will be available in March 2006.

The NMOSE's water conservation materials can be viewed on-line or downloaded as needed at http://www.ose.state.nm.us/publications_brochures.html. Hard copies of all of the material can be obtained by e-mail request to: waternm@ose.state.nm.us or by calling 1-800-WATERNM.



New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance

369 Montezuma Avenue, #149
Santa Fe, NM 87501

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Virtual Water Transfers

Jean Witherspoon

On November 15th, fifteen New Mexico Water Dialogue board members and friends participated in a UNM Economics Department exercise to test a water lease transfer model. The model, created in part by David Brookshire, imitates real world water lease transactions and transfers. This first exercise was to test how well the model worked. Participants were assigned different roles, initial funds, and water holdings for ten short timed scenarios. Roles included farmer, environmentalist, municipal staff, etc. The stated objective was to maximize profits. Each player could see what water was offered for lease in which stretch of the river at what price. The first participant to take action completed the transaction. A minimum threshold of water holdings

had to be reached to make money. Once each exercise started, mayhem ensued! Some participants just tried to maximize profits, regardless of assigned role. Some tried to adjust the “make as much money as possible” with their role (e.g., an environmentalist or farmer might not be willing to sell below a self-determined threshold even if this didn’t maximize profit). And, of course, some participants were more at ease with the model and the game. Participants were actually paid (a little) based on the profit they made in the games – to help make the exercise “real.” Our enthusiasm was too much for the model and it crashed part way through the exercises (i.e., the Arizona mainframe quit sending the exercise to UNM’s PCs). We haven’t seen any analysis of results yet, but

what a fun and interesting way to spend a Saturday morning! Expect to hear more about the model in the future.

