APPENDIX E
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REPORTS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Upper Rio Grande Basin
Water Operations Review

Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS Summary of Public Scoping Process

Prepared for:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Albuquerque District
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
CESPA-OD-W
Albuquerque, NM 87109-3435

February 15, 2001

Contract # DACA47-97-D-0009

Delivery Order #3

Science Applications International Corporation
An Employee-Owned Company

Prepared by:
2109 Air Park Road SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN WATER OPERATIONS REVIEW AND EIS SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS

1.0 Introduction

Public meetings were held to solicit input for preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a comprehensive system-wide review of the water operations activities that are conducted under the existing authorities of the Joint Lead Agencies (JLA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), in the Rio Grande basin above Fort Quitman, Texas. The project, called the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review (Review) and EIS, will consider changes primarily of the storage and release of water at reservoirs in the basin.

To ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Parts 1500–1508) implementing NEPA, the COE NEPA regulations (33 CFR Part 230), BOR NEPA regulations (45 FR 47944 [7/17/80] as amended by 48 FR 17151 [4/21/83]), Department of Interior Manual 516 DM 1-7, and other applicable federal and state environmental legislation, the JLA will prepare a programmatic Water Operations EIS that documents the Review process and informs the public about the resource conditions and effects of any proposed actions on the environment. NEPA compliance includes public involvement activities such as scoping meetings. This activity, as well as additional public involvement activities, have been identified and scheduled in a Public Involvement Plan (September 30, 2000) developed for the Review.

2.0 Scoping Process

2.1 Preparation

In preparation for the scoping meetings, a market survey was conducted by interviewing community representatives and interested stakeholders. The goal of this survey was to assist the Project Managers in determining who the stakeholders are, how and where they get information, identifying their primary issues, and understanding their perceptions and knowledge of the JLA and their responsibilities. The Project Managers used this information to help develop the informational materials for the meetings and to select the methods for advertising the public meetings. The names and addresses of those interviewed were added to the mailing list.

The survey was conducted in five geographic areas of the basin and included representatives from nine stakeholder groups. It concluded that there is a very high level of interest about surface water issues. Based on survey results, documented in the “Stakeholder Opinion Research for the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review EIS”, sixty percent of the people interviewed stated that their primary source of community information is the newspaper. A large majority prefer to receive information about the Water Operations Review through direct mail and the newspaper.

The Project Managers sent a newsletter to almost 400 people in early June 2000 that summarized the purpose and goals of the Review and included a list of the times and locations of all public scoping meetings. The newsletter was also distributed at other meetings to those not on the mailing list. Public notices listing the scoping meetings were published in at least one local newspaper in advance of each meeting. (**See sample in Appendix C.**) The Project Managers and Executive Committee members also called or faxed key stakeholders to encourage their attendance at the scoping meeting in their area.

2.2 Scoping Meetings

All public scoping meetings were held from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and were informal, using an open house format. **Table 1** lists the meeting dates and locations. Attendees were encouraged to sign in and view displays by the technical teams that provided background information on the resources to be evaluated during the project. Displays included maps of the basin, which located areas of interest to their resource, graphs, lists of known issues, and other information. Available to everyone at the door were two project fact sheets, a basin map, and a newsletter. Handouts were also available from most of the technical teams at their display tables. Media kits were provided to members of the press.

Table 1. Public Scoping Meeting Dates and Locations

Date	Location	Meeting Site
Wednesday, June 28	Alamosa, Colorado	Alamosa Elks Lodge 406 Hunt
Thursday, June 29,	Taos, New Mexico	Kachina Lodge 413 Paseo del Pueblo Norte
Wednesday, July 26	Española, New Mexico	Northern NM Community College 921 Paseo de Oñate
Wednesday, August 9	Chama, New Mexico	El Méson Lodge South Highway 84/64, 87520
Thursday, August 17	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th Street NW
Wednesday, September 20	Santa Fe, New Mexico	Radisson Hotel 750 N. St. Francis Drive
Wednesday, September 27	El Paso, Texas	Hilton Hotel 2027 Airway Boulevard
Tuesday, October 17	Las Cruces, New Mexico	New Mexico State University Corbett Center
Wednesday, October 18	Socorro, New Mexico	New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology Macey Center 801 Leroy Place

At approximately 6:30 p.m., a short slide presentation about the project was made by one of the Project Managers, followed by questions from the audience on the presentation. Specific questions on technical issues related to the resources to be studied were asked in the informal discussions at each display table after the slide presentation.

Questions and comments made by the public during and following the slide presentation were documented and are included in **Appendix A.** Each technical team representative was equipped with a flip chart so comments made during their discussions could be recorded. In addition, comment cards (**See Appendix B.**) were distributed at the registration table, which were collected at the meeting or mailed to a Project Manager later. These comments were categorized, grouped, and are summarized in the next section.

3.0 Meeting Results

3.1 Attendance

Attendance at the public scoping meetings ranged from one to forty people, counting only those in attendance who are not representatives of the JLA or cooperating agencies. Good discussion occurred at every meeting and some important issues were raised that will be considered by the technical teams during the development and analysis of the alternatives.

3.2 Comments

Comments are defined as statements or questions that are pertinent to the Review and EIS or that, while not directly within the scope of this project, are pertinent to water operations and management in the basin. Those outside the scope of this project will be documented and passed along to the appropriate agency for study under a different program.

All comments have been reviewed and categorized according to their content. Those questions and comments made during the discussion following the presentation at the meetings received responses at the meeting. They were also passed along to the appropriate technical team for consideration, along with those comments received on the cards. The comments from the public scoping meetings are available for review online at http://www.spa.usace.army.mil/urgwops/ or by contacting one of the three Project Managers.

There are twenty-two main categories, listed below. Additional categories or subcategories will be identified as needed throughout the project. The information following each category briefly describes the type of question or comment that was included under this category.

1. EIS and Scoping Process—how alternatives will be selected; how scoping and the meetings were conducted; in general, how the EIS will be developed.
2. Purpose and Need—goals for the project and EIS; who authorized the study; why the effort is being made.
3. Agencies and Authorities Involved/Project Scope—what agencies are involved; why some agencies are not involved; types of operations under consideration; definition and extent of authorities limiting the project.
4. Content, Methodology, Alternatives—definition of the system to be studied; models to be used in analyses; methodology and thoroughness of analysis.
5. Issues for Further Study but Outside Scope—suggested studies that cannot be included under this effort but that will be recorded for consideration under other programs.
6. Socioeconomics—effects of water operations and possible changes on local economies.
7. Environmental Justice—potential effects of changes in water operations on minority groups or small communities.
8. Land Use, Water Rights—impacts of land use along the river on river flows and water quality; potential effects of changing water operations on water rights.
9. Agriculture—potential effects of changing water operations on farmers and ranchers; need for evaluating the impacts of changing water operations on agriculture.
10. Riparian and Wetland Ecosystems—potential effects on bosque and other riparian or wetland areas; impacts on wildlife habitat; invasive plants of concern.

11. Cultural Resources—requirements for consultation; extent of survey and documentation.
12. Aquatic Systems—flows needed for fish; requirements for consideration of endangered species; effects on aquatic habitat from water operations decisions.
13. Water Quality—water quality standards and how they would be used; modeling.
14. Recreation—need to consider; importance of recreation businesses to the economy.
15. River Geomorphology—consider from historical perspective.
16. Sedimentation—sediment load, contamination, removal.
17. Hydrology and Hydraulics—effects of flows on groundwater; losses due to evaporation.
18. Water Operations/Structures—uses of dams; types of options to be considered in the alternatives; possible addition or removal of specific structures; why some structures not included in project; flood control.
19. Cumulative Impacts—effects of increasing population and water demands;
20. Relationship to Other Concurrent Projects—how this project relates to other water-related projects in the basin; effect of decisions from this project on other projects or agencies' work.
21. Public Involvement—public outreach opportunities; ways for the public to provide comments; meeting notification; comments on the meeting content and format.
22. Other Issues—not related to the Review and EIS.

Comments are grouped by main category in the graph below. Some comments were assigned to more than one category, so the total of the comments categorized below is greater than the total number of comments received.

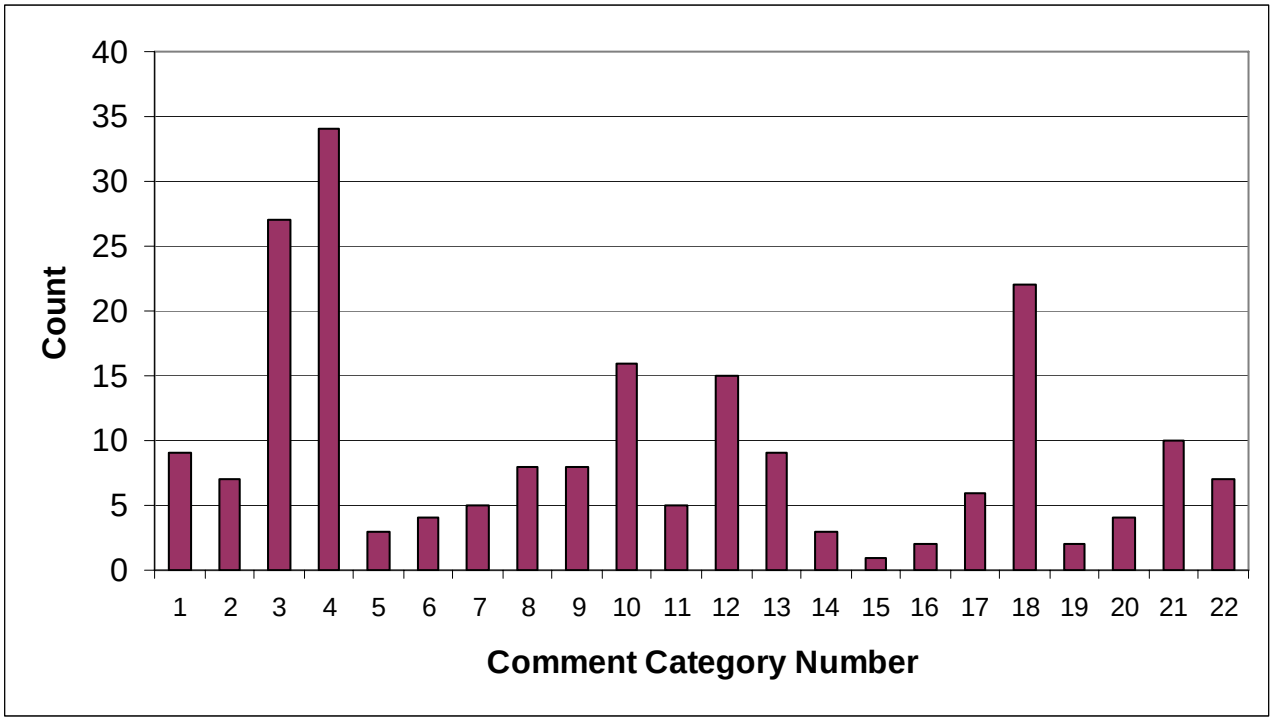

Figure 1. Comments Received During Scoping Process, Grouped by Category.

4.0 Upcoming Public Involvement Activities

It became clear during the scoping meetings that the stakeholders would like to discuss potential alternatives before they are selected and analyzed in the EIS. In response, the Project Managers committed to holding additional meetings to facilitate public discussion of alternatives. Other public outreach activities planned to be ongoing include the following.

- Press releases
- Newsletters
- Presentations to interested groups and organizations, as requested
- Presentations and briefings to tribal governments
- Workshops and tours
- Public meetings to discuss Review progress
- Public hearings on draft EIS

Comments and questions from the public can be submitted to the Project Managers through the web site, telephone, comment cards, or fax throughout the Review.

Appendix A:
Notes from Public Scoping Meetings

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Public Scoping Meeting; Alamosa, Colorado; Elks Lodge; June 28, 2000

Following is a summary of the questions, comments, and issues raised during the discussion that followed the formal presentation of the purpose and objectives of the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS at the scoping meeting in Alamosa, Colorado. They are presented in the order they were discussed.

- What is the potential for taking water from Colorado for the Rio Grande silvery minnow?
- Will groundwater depletion by private organizations be addressed?
- Who authorized the study and the funding?
- How can the Compact be kept as a sideboard?
- Don't see the need for the study to include the Closed Basin.
- Is the EIS based on the way the system works now or on the proposed changes?
- How will the alternatives be ranked?
- Why is the EIS not evaluating economic impacts, only environmental impacts?
- How much will endangered species concerns drive the study? Isn't the bottom line the impacts to the Rio Grande silvery minnow?
- Will no private water operations be reviewed?
- What is the project really looking at? What do you hope to derive from Colorado? I heard that the agencies want to take Colorado water to augment flows for the Rio Grande silvery minnow.
- What would Rio Grande flows look like if they mimic natural flows? How could this be done and still maintain flood control?
- Would the project affect the groundwater at the Great Sand Dunes?
- Is the Rio Grande Reservoir involved?
- What are the lead agencies hoping to happen regarding the sediment load in the Rio Grande, much of which is contaminated? Do they plan to remove the sediment?
- Increasing water demands due to increasing population is a large issue. What does this project hope to find out about this issue? The agencies will hear more about this as they go downstream with scoping meetings.
- Is there a trend toward undergroundwater storage?
- Will there be consideration of the creation of a conveyance channel to provide water to El Paso?
- How will the conflicting issues of conveyance efficiency, sustainable riparian systems, and flood control be addressed? How Elephant Butte is operated and how water gets there affects water users in the San Luis valley. Colorado is interested in protecting the Closed Basin Project and the Conejos River basin. It would be difficult to get the buy-in of Colorado people if there are negative impacts to San Luis valley water users.
- Hope to get a better understanding of the needs of endangered species from this process.
- What will the entire 5-year effort cost?
- To determine what the silvery minnow needs, the study must consider their habitat and the river system in 1850. How can the river system, in its current form, be compatible with the silvery minnow or the

southwestern willow flycatcher? Endangered species needs cannot be satisfied with the current river system. The silvery minnow habitat problem could be solved by getting rid of the dams on the river.

- If the lead agencies are bound by existing authorities that are clearly spelled out, is it possible to come up with anything different?
- What might result from this process?
- Will the teams look at average flows or extreme conditions such as drought?
- Is the Management Team dedicated full time to this project?

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Public Scoping Meeting; Taos, New Mexico; Kachina Lodge; June 29, 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 EIS at the scoping meeting in Taos, New Mexico. They are presented in the order they were discussed.

- Will the project look at removing levees or doing non-structural features?
- What are the environmental justice issues?
- Environmental justice issue: In some areas, changes in flows could have a negative effect on water quality. If water quality decreases as a result of changing water operations, existing uses of that water, such as irrigation, could be affected.
- Environmental justice issue: The transfer of water rights could affect minority water users.
- (In response to information on the Socioeconomics Technical Team display) How is flood damage to houses an issue? Houses should not be built in the floodplain to begin with, so the socioeconomic impacts to these houses due to floods should not be considered.
- How do socioeconomic impacts relate to those developed for the silvery minnow recovery plan? How much would using the Low Flow Conveyance Channel (LFCC) affect Compact deliveries and how much can landowners use water from the LFCC?
- Benefits derived from mimicking natural flows include protection of native species, which provides a socioeconomic benefit.
- Will there be opportunities for public input during the definition of alternatives? Can the public obtain a copy of the alternatives?
- The sooner people know what alternatives will be considered in the EIS, the better prepared they can be to respond.
- How does the work product from this review relate to other federal projects?
- Will the capacity and purpose of the reservoirs be within the scope of this EIS?
- Reoperating reservoirs has a logical place in a study like this.
- What will be done with information that might require a change in authority?
- This process seems to be different in that it will provide more in-depth analysis of operations.
- Why are you not looking at Platoro and El Vado operations?
- It appears that three agencies are working together and some others are not. Was there an attempt to include other agencies?
- A major concern is that this effort will study water operations and how changes would affect resources, but it is losing the opportunity to look at the whole system because it is leaving out some of the reservoirs, which are key components.
- In response to the answer above, it was recommended that one alternative be used to look at operations outside the existing authorities. How could the system be changed if the agencies had free rein to change the system?
- Perhaps just the “plumbing” of the entire system could be studied, just the technical issues, without considering the legal issues. The model, URGWOM, could be run for the entire physical system.

- Recommend an alternative that has the Closed Basin Project release more water from May through September and less during the winter. This would help even out the summer low flows to benefit ecological and recreational values and meets one of the purposes of the Closed Basin Project.
- Was the MRGCD asked to be a lead agency?
- The Bureau of Reclamation does direct water releases at El Vado that are not controlled by the MRCGD.
- What about winter releases of San Juan-Chama water?
- Will the EIS study sensitive species in addition to endangered species, such as the Rio Grande cutthroat trout below Costilla Reservoir? For example, how has stopping the leakage from some of the dams affected cutthroat habitat?
- What is meant by the objective of providing a historical baseline?
- Will more archaeological survey work be done?
- Will the Cultural Resources Technical Team look at potential additions to the National Historic Register?
- Will the technical teams study biology and geomorphology from a historical perspective?
- Will the project look at tribal and state water quality standards?
- Will teams consider how flows and changes in operations would affect water quality? How the operations of dams affect water quality?
- Is there a model that can correlate water quantity to water quality?
- There is a potential for conflict between the needs of the Rio Grande silvery minnow critical habitat, the requirements for flows, and dam operations.
- To what degree will the operations in the San Acacia reach be included?
- Additional comments from technical team flip charts:
- Consider the effects of flows on aquifer recharge. How might changes in operations affect domestic wells and near shallow groundwater systems?
- How might changes in water operations affect wetlands?
- Don’t forget rafting and kayaking recreational activities.

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Public Scoping Meeting; Española, New Mexico; Northern New Mexico Community College; July 26, 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 EIS at the scoping meeting in Taos, New Mexico. They are presented in the order they were discussed.

- Is this a true NEPA process, without a predetermined Preferred Alternative? Who selects the Preferred Alternative? Will there be one Preferred Alternative or an array of options?
- People in the Española valley are suspicious that they will be called upon to provide water to the middle Rio Grande valley for the silvery minnow because the people in the upper watershed feel they have less political clout. Acequias above Otowi gage are concerned about getting bought out to satisfy the needs of the minnow.
- It might be useful to present information on Review and EIS to the regional water planning board.
- How will traditional cultural properties (TCP) in and near the river be addressed?

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.

- Will this project affect the adjudication process?
- Does the project not deal with acequia and tribal issues?
- Tribes can do what ever they want to do.
- 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.
- 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.
- People are tired of attending meetings and of not having the host agencies really hear their concerns.
- 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.
- 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.
- Why must the Rio Grande silvery minnow be protected? How will that affect the process?
- 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?
- Is breaching dams, as some agencies are doing in the northwest U.S., an option being considered or is it possible to consider?
- One person heard that Texas wants to store water in Abiquiu Reservoir.
- It was recommended that a committee be formed in each community to provide input on the project. Who is on the Steering Committee?
- Can the general public make recommendations to the Steering Committee?
- Can the public recommend members to the Steering Committee?
- Are cultural concerns required to be addressed by law?
- 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.

- Will there be a risk-benefit assessment?

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review 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.

- Why was El Vado not included in the scope of this EIS?
- 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.
- What are the effects on Indian water rights other than the prior and paramount water rights?
- Why are the facilities of irrigation districts and acequias not included for consideration of changes to their operations?
- In formulating the alternatives for the EIS, are you willing to look at changing water diversions and the effect of changing irrigation district diversions?
- How does an agency become a cooperating agency?
- 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?
- 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.
- 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?
- Most of the public is not aware of what is an existing authority and what is outside the scope of this project.
- Will you be considering ways to reduce evaporative losses in the system?
- 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.

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS Public Scoping Meeting; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Radisson Hotel; September 20, 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 Santa Fe, New Mexico. They are presented in the order they were discussed. Other comments made to technical team representatives after the formal presentation are listed at the end of these notes.

- What is the time period for URGWOM calculations?
- How does URGWOM affect the State Engineer's decisions on other projects? How would the state use URGWOM to make decisions? For example, how would the projected diversions and timing of those diversions from the Rio Grande affect return flow credits?
- Who is using URGWOM?
- What is the relationship between the Bureau of Reclamation Draft EIS on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel and this Water Operations Review?
- When scoping began, the Rio Grande Project was not to be included in the Water Operations Review. Now that the federal district court has dismissed this case, will operations be addressed below Elephant Butte?
- Encourage agencies involved in the Review to look at old issues in the Rio Grande watershed, like the taking of land around Abiquiu Reservoir.
- The public scoping period is short, relative to the entire project timeline.
- Give some examples of improved flexibility and cooperation, and of increased efficiency that was referred to as a benefit of this Review.
- Does the Water Operations Review deal with San Juan water? Why isn't the City of Albuquerque involved?
- A major part of water loss in the system is due to evaporation. Is there a focus on technology to reduce losses?
- Why is El Vado Reservoir not highlighted?

From flip chart sheets:

- Preserve arroyo behind north section of dam.
- Very informative, learned a lot. Please do more of this.
- Newsletter to keep people informed would be a good idea.
- Give us water to raft on. We create jobs, tax base, and economic impact in some of the poorest counties in the nation. 8 cfs at the Colorado state line is unacceptable.
- Need a minimum pool established at Abiquiu. 75,000 acre-feet would be ideal!
- Remember the "intrinsic" value of the river—not just its 'instrumental" value. It has value in itself, not just what it can do for us.
- Great to have technical people to answer questions.

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS Public Scoping Meeting; El Paso, Texas; Airport Hilton Hotel; September 27, 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 El Paso, Texas. They are presented in the order they were discussed.

- Will the alternatives selected be plugged into URGWOM?
- How will the area below Elephant Butte benefit from this Review because water operations only address facilities above Elephant Butte.
- Will water quality be included in URGWOM?
- What is system efficiency?
- What is included in "regulatory compliance"?

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Public Scoping Meeting; Las Cruces, New Mexico; Corbett Center, New Mexico State University; October 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 Las Cruces, New Mexico. They are presented in the order they were discussed.

- Will you be doing analysis for the river below Elephant Butte?
- Agriculture is apparently not represented in any of the technical teams.
- Agriculture should be addressed by a separate technical team, similar to recreation. Why not cover recreation under the Land Use Technical Team and designate a separate team for agriculture, which has a vested interest in water operations and the potential for important impacts to changing operations.
- A farmer or rancher can contribute a great deal to this project. It doesn't appear that ranching interests are represented either.
- It is a disservice to represent recreation and wildlife but not include specific representation of agricultural interests. Some of the dams in the basin were built for agriculture, not recreation or fish.
- Agriculture should be raised in importance by adding a technical team or developing a poster and other information on how it will be addressed.
- What baseline information will be covered for operation of the Rio Grande Project?
- How much of the Rio Grande Project is flood control? Is this a minor part of this project?
- Which litigation are you referring to? You are missing a tremendous opportunity to get baseline river information that is important to Las Cruces.
- The middle Rio Grande litigation seems to be as disruptive as the litigation below Elephant Butte, but limits have not been placed on evaluating water operations there.
- Will actions and alternatives be considered outside the river channel and the floodplain? For example, will salt cedar baseline information be collected? You should understand pre-dam vegetation to determine trends and changes in vegetation in the floodplain.
- Will you only evaluate current conditions or will you compare these conditions with historic data and project the effects of changes?

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review 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.

- Will URGWOM have scenarios that will analyze the impacts of removing some diversion dams?
- Does removal of structures "mess up" this study if they are removed after the study is complete?
- Is the City of Albuquerque's use of San Juan-Chama water part of this study?
- 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.
- I am surprised that the USGS is not involved in this project.
- 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?
- 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.
- 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.
- Can we get a complete list of all agencies involved in the Water Operations Review?
- 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.
- 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.

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.

Appendix B:
Comment Card

UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN WATER OPERATIONS EIS COMMENT CARD

As the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, as joint lead agencies, undertake the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) on water operations in the Rio Grande Basin, we invite you to participate. Your input in identifying important issues affecting water operations at the various facilities to be addressed in the EIS is important to the lead-agencies. Your input will assist us in the formulation of alternatives for exercising the discretionary authority of Reclamation and the other joint lead agencies. Please write your comments in the space provided below. Fold the card in half, tape the edges, and mail the completed card back to us. Comments, names, and addresses are generally made available for public review. Individuals wishing to have their name/address withheld from public disclosure, should check this box. ☐ Thank you.

NOTE: Please return written comments by:

Tape Here

fold here

fold here

FROM: _____

Place Postage Here

TO: MR. CHRIS GORBACH
TEAM LEADER
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
505 MARQUETTE NW, SUITE 1313
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
87102-2162

Tape Here

Appendix C
Sample Newspaper Advertisement

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

For development of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for

Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations

Meetings will be held to gather input from the public on potential issues and concerns that should be considered during the development of the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS. The public meetings will include a presentation, an opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions of staff and managers, and an informal open house where technical teams will provide information on resources as well as receive comments. All meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. and end at 9:00 p.m.

Alamosa, CO	**Wednesday, June 28**	**Alamosa Elks Lodge, 406 Hunt**
Taos, NM	**Thursday, June 29**	**Kachina Lodge, 413 Paseo del Pueblo Norte**
Espanola, NM	**Wednesday, July 26**	**No. NM Community College, 921 Paseo de Onate**
Chama, NM	**Wednesday August 9**	**El Meson Lodge, South Highway 84/64**
Albuquerque, NM	**Thursday, August 17**	**Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th NW**
Santa Fe, NM	**Wednesday, Sept. 20**	**Radisson Hotel, 750 N. St. Francis**
El Paso, TX	**Wednesday, Sept. 27**	**El Paso Airport Hilton, 2027 Airway Blvd.**
Las Cruces, NM	**Tuesday, October 17**	**New Mexico State University, Corbett Center**
Socorro, NM	**Wednesday, October 18**	**NM Institute of Mining and Tech., Macy Center**

Additional information is available online at http://www.spa.usace.army.mil/urgwops/ or by calling:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gail Stockton
505-342-3348
Fax: 505-342-3195

Bureau of Reclamation
Chris Gorbach/ Leann Towne
505-248-5379/5321
Fax: 505-248-5308

Interstate Stream Commission
Rhea Graham
505-841-9480
Fax: 505-841-9485

Upper Rio Grande Basin
Water Operations Review
and EIS

Summary of Draft Alternatives Meetings and Comments

Prepared for:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Albuquerque District
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
CESPA-OD-W
Albuquerque, NM 87109-3435
November 2002

Contract # DACA47-97-D-0009

Delivery Order #3

Science Applications International Corporation
An Employee-Owned Company

Prepared by:
2109 Air Park Road SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Table of Contents

List of Appendices

List of Figures and Tables

Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS Summary of Public Meetings on Draft Alternatives

5.0 Introduction

At the public scoping meetings that were held to solicit input for the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from June through October of 2000, participants expressed an interest in learning about the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS before they were finalized. In response to this request from the public, the Joint Lead Agencies (JLA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), held ten public meetings to discuss the possible components of the alternatives and the strategy for developing them into action alternatives planned to be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended [42 United States Code (USC) 4321 et seq.].

This summary of the public meetings on the draft alternatives describes the meeting arrangements, handouts, and comments received on the draft alternatives.

5.1 Alternatives Process

5.1.1 Preparation

To develop the alternatives, the JLA Project Managers worked with the technical teams to identify possible alternatives that might benefit specific resources and would be within the authorities of the lead agencies. They developed some visual aids in the form of a set of “playing cards” to explain the concept of varying water operations at different facilities within the Rio Grande system that were intended to help those who are not water managers understand the possible interrelationships between water operations and the scenarios that could be developed into action alternatives.

The alternatives were explained using a playing card analogy to describe current operations and proposed draft operations changes. The cards “we hold” were described as the current operations (No Action Fact Cards) at each of the facilities. The cards “we want to play” were described as the components of the draft alternatives, the possible changes to water operations at specific facilities or in particular reaches of the river. The possible changes must be evaluated beforehand so that we play the right card at the right time and know the outcome of that choice. Uncertainty was represented by two “wild” cards, one for variability of weather and runoff; the other, a “joker”, to symbolize unplanned issues that may affect water management. Sets of the No Action Fact Cards were given to each participant at the public meetings. Sets of cards showing the possible components of the draft alternatives were printed and used at the meetings to demonstrate different combinations that could comprise alternatives to be evaluated.

Before the cards and the slide presentation for the public meetings were finalized, the concept was presented to the Review and EIS Steering Committee at their meeting on December 6, 2001. The committee members provided valuable feedback that the Project Managers used to refine the cards and their presentation. After all public meetings were completed, they were summarized to the Steering Committee at their June 27, 2002, meeting. Comments from the Steering Committee from the December 2001 meeting are included in the summarized and detailed comments (**Appendix B**) in this report. Comments from the Steering Committee at the June 2002 meeting were related mainly to technical team plans for future analyses of the alternatives. The committee expressed appreciation of the use of the cards to explain complex processes to the public. Details of the Steering Committee’s questions and comments from the June 2002 meeting can be found in the meeting notes on the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS web site at http://www.spa.usace.army.mil/urgwops/.

The Project Managers made the meeting room arrangements and had legal advertisements published in local newspapers in advance of the meetings. The meetings were also announced in the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review newsletter mailed to the list of over 600 names in January 2002 and in the Public Notice that was faxed to each of the Southwest Region tribal officials.

Newspapers that published the advertisement shown in **Appendix C** include the Albuquerque Journal, Albuquerque Tribune, Placitas Northside Signpost, El Paso Times, Las Cruces News, Sierra County Sentinel, El Defensor Chieftain, Rio Grande Sun, Taos News, El Hispano News, and the Alamosa Valley Courier. Public service announcements were sent to KUNM-Albuquerque, KDCE-Española, and KFLH-Chama. Other public outreach included posting notices at various spots around town by the Abiquiu Project office staff and placing Review and EIS newsletters on a rack for free distribution in an Abiquiu store. Additional public outreach efforts involved invitations to groups such as the Abiquiu Advisory Committee, invited by Abiquiu Project Office, and the Española Planning and Zoning office staff who sent a notice via e-mail to the Jemez y Sangre Regional Water Planners.

5.2 Public Meetings

All public meetings on the draft alternatives were held from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. **Table E-1.1** lists the meeting dates and locations. Attendees were encouraged to sign in and pick up handouts including a set of cards characterizing the No Action alternative, previously distributed newsletters, and the Purpose and Need statement for the project.

At approximately 7:00 p.m., a slide presentation was given by one of the Project Managers. The presentation included a brief overview of the project purpose and need, followed by an explanation of the concept of alternatives development for NEPA, and descriptions of the No Action alternative and the possible action alternatives, using the playing cards. The presentations were informal, and questions were encouraged.

Questions and comments made by the public during and following the slide presentation were documented. In addition, comment cards were distributed at the registration table, which were collected at the meeting or mailed to a Project Manager later. These comments were categorized, grouped, and are summarized in the next section. All comments from the flip charts and comment cards from each meeting, including the Steering Committee meeting on December 6, 2001 are listed in **Appendix A**, grouped by category**.** Some of the comments are included under more than one category.

Table E-1.1. Draft Alternatives Public Meeting Dates and Locations

Date	Location	Meeting Site
Tuesday, January 15	Las Cruces, New Mexico	NM Office of the State Engineer, District IV Office 1680 Hickory Loop, Suite J
Wednesday, January 16	El Paso, Texas	Chamizal National Memorial 800 S. San Marcial
Tuesday, February 5	Truth or Consequences, New Mexico	City Council Chambers 405 W. Third Street
Wednesday, February 6	Socorro, New Mexico	USBR Socorro Field Division 2401 State Road 1
Tuesday, March 19	Albuquerque, New Mexico	US Army Corps of Engineers 4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
Wednesday, March 20	Santa Fe, New Mexico	NM Department of Game and Fish 1 Wildlife Lane
Tuesday, April 16	Española, New Mexico	Rio Arriba County Complex 1122 Industrial Road
Wednesday, April 17	Abiquiu, New Mexico	Abiquiu Elementary School US Highway 84, Gate #21342
Tuesday, May 14	Alamosa, Colorado	USBR Alamosa Field Div., 10900 HWY 160 East
Wednesday, May 15	Pilar, NM	BLM Visitors Center State Highway 68

Meeting Results

5.3 Attendance

Attendance at the draft alternatives public meetings ranged from one to 55 people, counting only those in attendance who are not representatives of the JLA or cooperating agencies. Good discussion occurred at every meeting and some important issues were raised that will be considered by the technical teams during the development and analysis of the alternatives.

5.4 Comments

All comments have been reviewed and categorized according to their content. They were passed along to the appropriate technical team for consideration during final selection of the alternatives to be evaluated.

There are twenty-three main categories, listed below. The information following each category briefly describes the type of question or comment that was included under this category.

1. Agriculture—potential effects of changing water operations on farmers and ranchers; need for evaluating the impacts of changing water operations on agriculture, especially on acequias and the effect of increased flows on acequia diversions.

2. Authorities and Agencies Involved/Project Scope—what agencies are involved; why some agencies are not involved; how to become a cooperating agency; resources for project; state and federal laws; definition and extent of authorities limiting the project.
3. Content, Methodology, and Alternatives—definition of the system to be studied; models to be used in analyses; methodology and thoroughness of analysis; facilities to be included in impact analysis; how alternatives are to be selected.
4. Cultural Resources— extent of survey and documentation; types of information to be addressed; meaning of cultural resources.
5. EIS and Scoping Process— development of records of decision; in general; comment period for EIS.
6. Environmental Justice— evaluation of cultural properties/resources.
7. Hydrology and Hydraulics—channel capacity; lake levels; new gages needed in system.
8. Issues for Further Study but Outside Scope—suggested studies that cannot be included under this effort but that will be recorded for consideration under other programs.
9. Land Use, Water Rights—impacts of land use along the river on river flows and water quality; potential effects of changing water operations on water rights; rights to stored water now in system; possible changes to water rights.
10. Meeting Arrangements—comments on the meeting format and facilities.
11. Other Issues—not related to the Review and EIS.
12. Project Background—history of relevance to the project.
13. Public Involvement—topics to cover and ways to explain the alternatives to the public.
14. Recreation—less management is needed for recreation.
15. Riparian and Wetland Ecosystems—potential effects on bosque and other riparian or wetland areas; impacts on wildlife habitat; invasive plants of concern; managing riparian systems.
16. Sedimentation and Erosion—sediment loads; sediment in reservoirs; streambank erosion.
17. Socioeconomics—models to be used; evaluate other social factors; concern for local economics.
18. Threatened and Endangered Species—water delivery needed for fish; determine the requirements for endangered species, especially silvery minnow; effects on aquatic habitat from water operations decisions.
19. Water Delivery—use of San Juan-Chama water; maintenance of floodways; Compact obligations; water accounting.
20. Water Operations/Flows/Rivers—concerns over some of the flows proposed in alternatives under different channel capacities; impacts of changes in water operations on landowners
21. Water Operations/Reservoirs—uses of dams; evaporation losses; management of reservoirs and lake levels; storage of native water.
22. Water Operations/Structures—concerns over functioning of Low Flow Conveyance Channel.
23. Water Quality—mitigation of water quality impacts; meaning of water quality.

Comments shown in **Figure E-1.1** below are grouped by main category in the graph below. Some comments were assigned to more than one category, so the total of the comments categorized below is greater than the total number of comments received.

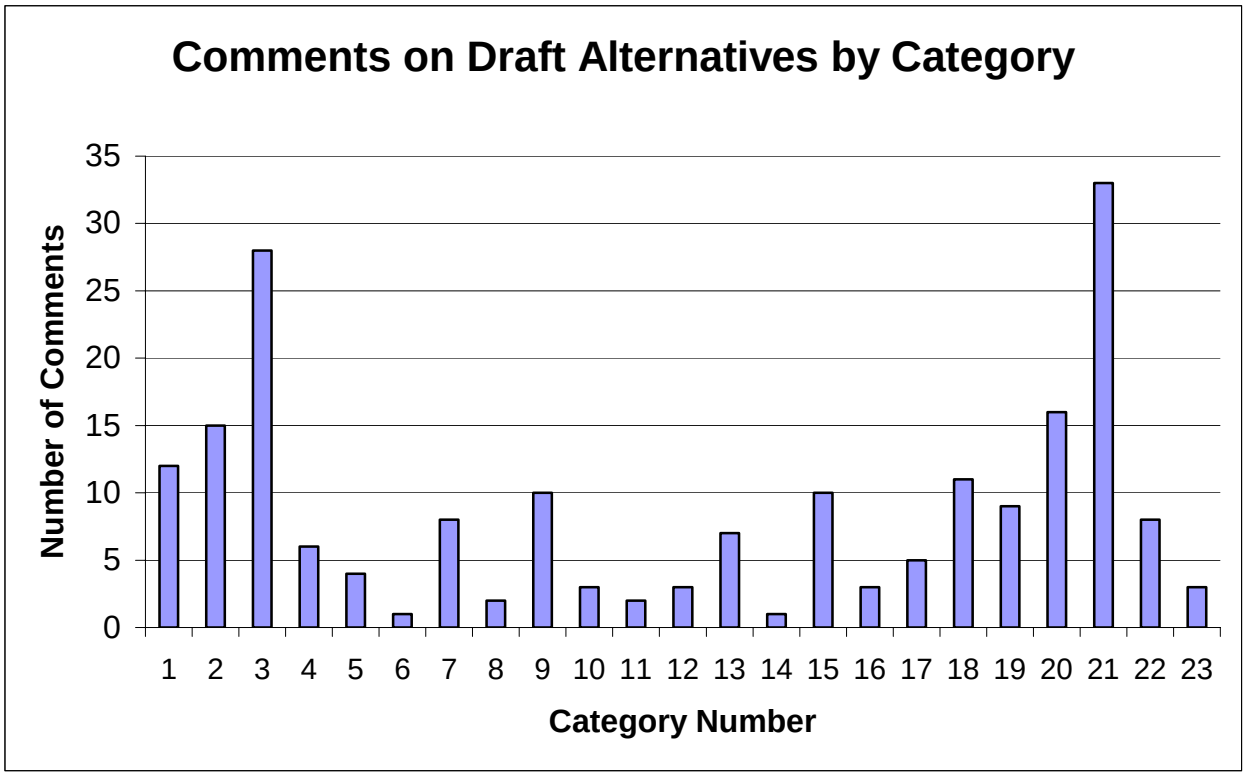

Figure E-1.1. Comments Received During Draft Alternatives Meetings, Grouped by Category

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Appendix A
Notes from Public Meetings on Draft Alternatives

Category: Agriculture

- Why isn't agriculture listed along with recreation and endangered species as a goal?
- One of the things we have to keep in mind when regulating the flows on the Rio Chama is in the event of a very wet winter, that the water is released so it does not go over 6,220 elevation. All the acequia users are so concerned about streambank erosion and damage to the diversion dams. Though we are landowners around the lake, when the lake rises, it floods extremely valuable riparian land, such as the Canones Creek. We are very fortunate to own this piece of land.
- Make water available for agrarian community lifestyle.
- Need to see words about farming, ranching, and agriculture in list of goals.
- Disappointing that ag, ranching not listed as priority.
- Can you look at operations that benefit acequias? Storage in Heron for example?
- Is there a graph for Rio Chama—hydrograph—is there one for the year—showing flows for critical months for agriculture?
- Ag priority must be addressed.
- Can consider storing native water in Abiquiu for irrigators in Rio Chama valley and water quality impacts—related to preservation of cultural resources.
- Danger to acequias from purchase of water rights by ABQ, other cities.
- Acequias and rural life around the acequias—affected by channel capacity are important and wiped out by high flows.

Category: Authorities and Agencies Involved/Project Scope

- Are the BIA and pueblos the same entity? How did entities get "invited" to be a cooperating entity?
- Under what statutory authority is this study being done?
- Have you asked other agencies to be cooperating agency (like county, other)?
- Who is the project proponent? What stimulated this whole thing?
- Who pays for the cost of the Review and EIS?
- What is a Cooperating Agency? How do you become one? What are the benefits of being one? Are you on mailing list?
- Do you get some "say" that others do not have?
- Definition of cooperating agency and how to become one?
- Familiar with public law. that created Abiquiu Dam? Why SJ-C water/intent?
- Benefits of cooperating agencies? Have voice/input others don't?
- Resources—technical or financial required of a cooperating agency? Cost to acequia?

- Can the acequias become formal cooperators?
- New Mexico manages water flowing through it.
- How does this play into state and federal laws and agencies?

Category: Content, Methodology, and Alternatives

- How come up with initial combinations of alternatives?
- Definition of mitigation?
- Who makes the decision about the draft alternatives?
- Management does not equal "lay" language.
- Are you trying to keep overbank flooding from occurring?
- How does Review and EIS affect north of NM line?
- Plans for river through valley (San Luis)?
- Is reach 13-14 the entire BOR Rio Grande project?
- Is ABQ use of SJ-C water part of No Action?
- NEPA process for drawdown of Caballo?
- Which LFCC configuration will be used to evaluate alternatives?
- Consider effects of ABQ wastewater and Isleta cultural values.
- Are some cards trumping other cards?
- Have you established a baseline?
- In summer, talk of ladder at San Acacia dam—part of this Review?

Category: Cultural Resources

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo takes precedence over ESA. Cultural values are endangered.
- What do you mean by cultural resources?
- Will there be a balance with cultural resources?
- Aside from Native American resources, what are considered cultural resources?
- Can consider storing native water in Abiquiu for irrigators in Rio Chama valley and water quality impacts—related to preservation of cultural resources.
- What does "cultural resources" include? Does it include acequias?

Category: EIS and Scoping Process

- Is it possible to have 1 ROD for all agencies?
- Consider longer public comment period for DEIS.
- Review half-way through? Can't understand why more people didn't show up.
- Does this EIS become (a) manual for managing water?

Category: Environmental Justice

- Will there be an environmental justice evaluation of cultural properties/resources?

Category: Hydrology and Hydraulics

- For evaporation, lose less water if get it down the river faster?
- Alternative—consider channel and levee maintenance to allow improved channel capacity for normal flows in reaches
- What is safe channel capacity? How arrived at?
- Also safe channel capacity.
- Discussion of storage and safe channel capacity is important.
- Use Cochiti recreation pool to maintain hydrograph—for drought reserve.
- Need to educate public on water levels in system, lake levels historically.

Category: Issues for Further Study but Outside Scope

- Another thing that should be very important to look at is erosion control projects around upstream of the lake—for example, the Canones Creek. If the Corps of Engineers would construct cement planks so the river can't erode any deeper, this would improve the quality of the water you are conveying downstream, and (this) would help the sediment build-up.
- One more thing is the trash. The Corps of Engineers should look at the illegal dumping here in Canones, just above the Canones Creek. (Every) time this arroyo or wash flash-floods, there (are) tons of trash moved with the water downstream to the lake. Again, this would do wonders for the quality of water downstream.
- Companion study for water rights ownership?

Category: Land Use, Water Rights

- Need more discussions on providing acequias water from Abiquiu storage.
- Who has rights to the native water to be stored in Abiquiu?
- Is transfer of water rights a legislative mandate?
- Ghost Ranch water belongs to RCAA.
- RCAA use (storage) of Abiquiu water so irrigation earlier; also, pueblos.
- Concerned about separation of water rights from the land. It's permanent.
- Do other property owners have storage rights (e.g. like Ghost Ranch)?
- Is damage being done to property owners? Is the high concentration of water table—high releases—keep land wet—create wet areas—is this a takings?
- Are there any other entities with storage rights in Abiquiu (apart from City of Albuquerque)?

Category: Meeting Arrangements

- Please have another meeting place.

Category: Other Issues

- In closing, we are very concerned about the storage water at the lake because we do not get any benefit from the lake. We lost some of our land the government condemned. All this happened to (serve) the needs of someone else, such as the acequias and the City of Albuquerque. The Corps of Engineers also sides more with these entities than the landowners, the ranchers around the lake. For instance, the office manager at Abiquiu can't see a cow grazing by the water, because he calls me on the phone to get them out; yet they cannot do anything about the trash

problem on Highway 96, where all the sightseers (throw) trash as they walk down to the lake. We own all this property.

- How (do you) avoid being drawn into lawsuits on water use and delivery?

Category: Project Background

- Congressional Report on the Upper Rio Grande—1936? 1930s Congressional Report on Upper Rio Grande—good
- information for history.
- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo can't be changed—ag, timber, grazing rights.
- Difficult to understand what you're doing.

Category: Recreation

- Like to see less management for recreation—water is precious and should not be used.

Category: Riparian and Wetland Ecosystems

- 500 cfs—is this the new concept/design—when LFCC moved to west side of valley? Reason—no constructed channel through
- SWWF habitat—new design with no diversion (counter to RGCC recs to meet delivery).
- Provide funding to get rid of trash trees (elm, Russian olive), conservation, drink water, harm ditches, fields, bosque.
- Look at controlling noxious weeds (saltcedar) that damage riparian areas and use water.
- How flush saltcedar from riparian areas to re-establish native vegetation?
- Have you considered management of forest land along Rio Grande? Water content of P-J, susceptible to fire; increased
- Number of trees.
- Requirement for fish and wildlife habitat on reservoirs?
- Is saltcedar eradication part of the project?
- One of the things we have to keep in mind when regulating the flows on the Rio Chama is in the event of a very wet winter, that the water is released so it does not go over 6,220 elevation. All the acequia users are so concerned about streambank erosion and damage to the diversion dams. Though we are landowners around the lake, when the lake rises, it floods extremely valuable riparian land, such as the Canones Creek. We are very fortunate to own this piece of land.
- Management should be done to keep river, bosque, [and] fish healthy. Municipal and industrial use is secondary.

Category: Sedimentation and Erosion

- Degradation/Clean Water Act. 1,800 cfs below Abiquiu to much; 1,200 cfs too much. Sand sedimentation "extreme" at Chamita (historical acequia).
- Is accumulation of silt in reservoirs a significant factor?
- Another thing that should be very important to look at is erosion control projects around upstream of the lake—for example, the Canones Creek. If the Corps of Engineers would construct cement planks so the river can't erode any deeper, this would improve the quality of the water you are conveying downstream, and (this) would help the sediment build-up.

Category: Socioeconomics

- Use economics model?
- Can economic analysis look at micro effects on local areas and not just look at macro level?
- Can other social factors be examined as well? Treaties protect agriculture, grazing, and timber rights.
- Did the original legislation for San Juan-Chama compact provide for economic development?

Category: Threatened and Endangered Species

- BOR staff dug up minnows 7 feet down in river bed.
- If SJ-C water can be used for T&E species, shouldn't it be used in the San Juan watershed (its native watershed) for that purpose? Why use non-native water to support T&E?
- What's the water delivery for the minnow and flycatcher?
- Will the study look at what happens when T&E species demands [to] use up water and leave reservoirs dry?
- Does BOR consider SJ-C water as supply for silvery minnow?
- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo takes precedance over ESA. Cultural values are endangered.
- Will ESA and T&E species have precedence over other concerns?
- What happens if new T&E species is added and must be addressed?
- How did minnow survive all those years when river was dry (late summer)?
- Need honesty in this process regarding T&E. River has been dry in past at times.

Category:Water Delivery

- LFCC - How does Bosque del Apache get water if no diversion?
- There is someone who knows at any given time [make-up of water]—just needs to be put in model or format that someone can find out.
- Is there someplace to go (e.g. Internet) [to learn] what the make-up of water is that is moving through the river?
- Does New Mexico have control of the amount of water delivered to Texas - Compact obligations? Like Colorado?
- Colorado River compact allocates 11% water to New Mexico (Regulatory Congressional report—1930s—SJ-C).
- When would ABQ begin using their SJ-C water?
- Is there active plan to maintain floodway above SM if no diversion to LFCC?—would cause problems for NM to meet compact obligations. Otherwise at cross-purposes.
- Management should be done to keep river, bosque, [and] fish healthy. Municipal and industrial use is secondary.

Category: Water Operations/Flows/Rivers

- Is there a graph for Rio Chama—hydrograph—is there one for the year—showing flows for critical months for agriculture?

- What's the impact of channel capacity > 1,200 cfs on acequias on Rio Chama?
- Can an alternative look at channel capacity < 1,200 cfs below Abiquiu?
- Include Rio Chama in Rio Grande.
- Can you look at what elevation would flood the 285 highway?
- Flows above 1,200 cfs damage ditches, cause erosion, destabilize banks.
- High flows (> 1,200) damage banks.
- Don't recall ever seeing 2,500 cfs.
- San Juan-Chama water does not benefit locals—burdens the valley with high flows.
- High channel capacity, even 1,200 cfs, is too much.
- Acequias and rural life around the acequias—affected by channel capacity are important and wiped out by high flows.
- Land ownership within banks of Rio Chama—need to evaluate compensation of these landowners from impacts of water operations.
- Taking into account SJ-C diversions at ABQ?
- Don't recall ever seeing 2,500 cfs.
- Even 1,200 cfs is too much from Abiquiu. (RCAA) comment since 1992. Corps has recorded damages at 1,800 cfs.
- Is channel capacity at 1,200-2,500 for both Chama and Rio Grande?
- There's no way to control flow in Rio Grande.

Category: Water Operations/Reservoirs

- Was no provision for easements at Abiquiu. Rationale: 1) Cultural preservation 2) Reparations for SJ-C trespass.
- Can you look at operations that benefit acequias? Storage in Heron for example?
- Can consider storing native water in Abiquiu for irrigators in Rio Chama valley and water quality impacts—related to preservation of cultural resources.
- Concern: Wakes on Abiquiu—but some disagree.
- Is there a significant difference in evaporation rate at reservoirs high up (El Vado and Heron) vs. those lower down
- (Elephant Butte and Cochiti) that make them preferable for storage?
- What would state's position [be] if agency applied for permit above 6,220 feet in Abiquiu?
- Increase/make storage in Cochiti.
- Use Cochiti recreation pool to maintain hydrograph—for drought reserve.
- Concern for low lake levels at Abiquiu.
- Change Cochiti authorization to add flexibility to manage in droughts.
- Do all dams have a minimum pool required?

- How would 200k native storage in Abiquiu affect homes?
- Would ABQ have to evacuate storage for conservation storage [n Abiquiu]?
- How will future demands in ABQ affect Abiquiu drawdown?
- Is there space between 6,220 and 6,250 feet in Abiquiu for storage authorized now? Easements not currently in place.
- Marinas in Elephant Butte that must be moved is an issue.
- Will the study look at what happens when T&E species demands [to] use up water and leave reservoirs dry?
- What will happen when water drains from Abiquiu? No native water now?
- One of the things we have to keep in mind when regulating the flows on the Rio Chama is in the event of a very wet winter, that the water is released so it does not go over 6,220 elevation. All the acequia users are so concerned about streambank erosion and damage to the diversion dams. Though we are landowners around the lake, when the lake rises, it floods extremely valuable riparian land, such as the Canones Creek. We are very fortunate to own this piece of land.
- Easement level of ABQ water at Abiquiu?
- Will current SJ-C issues in Heron, Abiquiu, and Cochiti be included? Will there be additional alternatives added to consider different operations?
- If go to 6,220 feet at Abiquiu, it floods highway.
- Suggest make storage available for Rio Chama Acequia Association.
- Is additional space to be acquired at Abiquiu?

Category: Water Operations/Structures

- LFCC - considering seasonal timing of diversions?
- How will this system (LFCC) work?
- Is there active plan to maintain floodway above SM if no diversion to LFCC?—would cause problems for NM to meet compact obligations. Otherwise at cross-purposes.
- LFCC - not going to stop drainage into it.
- 500 cfs—is this the new concept/design—when LFCC moved to west side of valley? Reason—no constructed channel through
- SWWF habitat—new design with no diversion (counter to RGCC recs to meet delivery).
- LFCC-BOR function as a drain—will this be part of alternatives? Used at a reduced rate as drain only, no diversion.
- No LFCC diversion is now the preferred alt.
- Lack of LFCC with lack of maintenance channel will hurt NM—impacts must be considered—add to alternative.

Category: Water Quality

- Degradation/Clean Water Act. 1,800 cfs below Abiquiu to much; 1,200 cfs too much. Sand sedimentation "extreme" at Chamita (historical acequia).
- Can you elaborate on water quality? What do you mean by water quality?

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Appendix B
Notes from Steering Committee Meeting on Draft Alternatives
December 6, 2001

Category: Agriculture

- Define problems and needs of resource: 1) What does silvery minnow need that it is not getting now? 2) What are our problems in meeting the compact? 3) What are needs of irrigators? 4) What is the timing of those needs? Then we can examine the flexibility in the system as far as timing of releases.

Category: Authorities and Agencies Involved/Project Scope

- Eliminate differences in individual agencies, operational rules, and regulations.
- Consider legal and institutional constraints prior to operations changes (i.e. treaties, compacts, decrees, statutes, constitutional issues). It may be that present operations are best alternative.

Category: Content, Methodology, and Alternatives

- Is all data available, or do we need more?
- If the above recommendation cannot be followed, then the No Action alternative should at least include extreme ranges of initial storage levels as a Wild Card phenomena.
- Despite the litigation, alternative storage levels in Elephant Butte should be modified and considered in the EIS.
- I tend to agree with the No Action flexibilities presented. With more information, I may alter my viewpoint.
- Structure models and data (info) so as to achieve the practical application by responsible planners.
- Express that a combination of alternatives could be an alternative.
- Modification of existing facilities needs to be taken into account (i.e. San Marcial Bridge and channel changes). It should be addressed.
- Include El Vado as a (Wild) Card even through it's no change. Identify flexibility at El Vado as Wild Card.
- Add a number of mid-stream flow gages, plus gages of all significant diversions and inflows. Return flows to facilitate system management. Make resulting data available on a real-time basis.
- Develop a matrix of combinations and permutations of alternatives.
- Overlapping circles indicating conflict versus agreement are fine, but they need to take discharge elevation into account.
- How will timing dimesion be incorporated into alternatives analysis?
- Add El Vado.

Category: Hydrology and Hydraulics

- URGWOM will be much improved in the future with gages at all river outflow/inflow points.

Category: Land Use, Water Rights

- Consider all tribal, constitutional, legal, and natural restraints or use prior to evalution of water supply.

Category: Meeting Arrangements

- (Have) facilitator to help communicate.
- You asked for more alternatives and ideas, but you shut all of them down and there were reasons certainly; but what will happen if the public gets that response? It was a fairly negative experience.

Category: Public Involvement

- Education on this important water issue is timely and imperative.
- For public presentations, take example issues (e.g., minimum flow for minnow, ABQ diversion of SJC, etc.) and show how flexibilities and scenarios could affect those issues: mitigate, enhance, injure, etc.
- Suggest narrative write-up of analysis of single-objective posters (to provide a means of sharing what the managers learned here).
- Explain authorities really well.
- When you deal with lay people, you need to clearly explain what this is going to accomplish.
- Express implications of "what if" scenarios.
- Remember to emphasize: 1) Rio Grande compact obligations, 2) Mexican treaty obligations.
- For clarity, rename CB scenario as 60K instead of 600K.
- Simplification of "rule-training" and "compact" requirements in URGWOM planning model needs to be transparent (i.e., well-described and defended).

Category: Riparian and Wetland Ecosystems

- What are the consumptive demands and future projections?

Category: Socioeconomics

- Human dimension considerations -- what are priorities?

Category: Threatened and Endangered Species

- Define problems and needs of resource: 1) What does silvery minnow need that it is not getting now? 2) What are our problems in meeting the compact? 3) What are needs of irrigators? 4) What is the timing of those needs? Then we can examine the flexibility in the system as far as timing of releases.

Category: Water Delivery

- Define problems and needs of resource: 1) What does silvery minnow need that it is not getting now? 2) What are our problems in meeting the compact? 3) What are needs of irrigators? 4) What is the timing of those needs? Then we can examine the flexibility in the system as far as timing of releases.

Category: Water Operations/Reservoirs

- Store native water in Cochiti.
- Reassess ownership of reservoir evaporation losses.
- Multi-level outlet works.

- Managing Jemez Dam as wet reservoir and/or to provide sediment to Middle Rio Grande -- flexibility was identified in consultation with tribes. Take a closer look at any potential benefits that this dam can provide to the overall integrated operations plan.
- Examine constraints to increasing storage of native water in any/all upstream reservoirs.
- Hold water higher as long as possible; release water from Elephant Butte instead of storing it, or charge evapotranspiration losses to Elephant Butte Irrigation District, not Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District --> regarding compact charge.
- Cover reservoirs.
- Maybe problems have to do with timing of releases.
- Identification of additional up-basin storage capacity.

Category: Water Quality

- Authorization to operate pools to cycle reservoirs to mitigate water quality concerns.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Appendix C
Sample Newspaper Advertisement

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

For development of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for
Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations

Meetings will be held to describe draft alternatives and to get feedback from the public before the alternatives are finalized. The public meetings will begin with a presentation that describes the current operations, which is the draft "No Action Alternative." The draft alternatives are being developed in an iterative process, which is why input from the public is so important. The public will be provided an opportunity to comment on the draft alternatives identified, using an informal open house. All meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m.

Las Cruces, NM Suite J	Tuesday, January 15	NM OSE, Dist. IV Office, 1680 Hickory Loop,
El Paso, TX	Wednesday, January 16	Chamizal National Memorial, 800 S. San Marcial
T or C, NM	Tuesday, February 5	City Council Chambers, 405 W. Third Street
Socorro, NM	Wednesday, February 6	USBR Socorro Field Division, 2401 State Road 1
Albuquerque, NM NE	Tuesday, March 19	US Army Corps of Engineers , 4101 Jefferson Pl.
Santa Fe, NM	Wednesday, March 20	NM Dept. of Game & Fish, 1 Wildlife Ln.
Espanola, NM	Tuesday, April 16	Rio Arriba County Complex, 1122 Industrial Rd.
Abiquiu, NM #21342	Wednesday, April 17	Abiquiu Elem. School, US Highway 84, Gate
Alamosa, CO	Tuesday, May 14	USBR Alamosa Field Div., 10900 HWY 160 E.
Pilar, NM	Wednesday, May 15	BLM Visitors Center, HWY 68

Additional information is available online at **http://www.spa.usace.army.mil/urgwops/** or by calling:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gail Stockton
505-342-3348
Fax: 505-342-3195
gail.r.Stockton@spa02.usace.army.mil

Bureau of Reclamation
Steve Kolk
505-248-5383
Fax: 505-248-5308
skolk@uc.usbr.gov

Interstate Stream Commission
Rhea Graham
505-841-9494, ext. 128
Fax: 505-841-9484
rgraham@ose.state.nm.us

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK