

New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee

Restoration Plan for Sparton Technology Settlement Funds

Pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 9601-9675), the New Mexico Office of Natural Resources Trustee (NMONRT) has prepared a Restoration Plan, subject to public comment, for the utilization of monetary awards for damages to the natural resources of the State of New Mexico. The Restoration Plan details the utilization of a portion of the funds recovered from the Sparton Technology Inc. settlement to compensate the public for the lost use of injured ground water. The Consent Decree that resolves the City of Albuquerque et al., v. Sparton Technology, Inc. and apportions funds to the Office of Natural Resources Trustee was signed on March 3, 2000.

CERCLA provides that the governor of each state is to designate responsible officials as Trustees for natural resources under the jurisdiction of state government. Accordingly, the Governor of New Mexico designated the Natural Resources Trustee as trustee for resources under the jurisdiction of the State of New Mexico. In addition, CERCLA requires development of a plan to use funds for the restoration, rehabilitation or replacement or acquisition of injured resources.

Sparton Technology Site

The Sparton Technology site is located at 9621 Coors Road NW in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Sparton Technology is currently performing corrective action at the site to address the ground water plume that has been contaminated with solvents. There are no drinking water wells impacted by the contaminant plume and an off-site ground water recovery system has been successful in preventing any further expansion of the plume. Documentation concerning the remedial cleanup efforts is located in the repository at the Taylor Ranch Branch Library. Questions regarding the cleanup effort can be directed to the New Mexico Environment Department, Ground Water Quality Bureau, 4131 Montgomery, Albuquerque, NM 87109, 505/841-9458.

Restoration Project

As outlined below, the restoration project will develop municipal water conservation plans for communities in the Middle Rio Grande basin that have municipal water systems, draft the ordinances needed to implement the conservation plans, and assist local governments as they put the conservation plans into place. Recognizing that every community's water system is different, this project includes an individual assessment of each municipal water system and a conservation plan tailored to the needs of each community.

Like other cities throughout the United States, the City of Albuquerque has achieved dramatic success in reducing water consumption through the implementation of voluntary

and mandatory water conservation measures. The City of Albuquerque reports that it has saved over 88 billion gallons of water since the City's water conservation program began in 1995. Per person water use has dropped more than 20%, and system use is down 26%.

The NMONRT will provide the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) of New Mexico with a grant to implement the restoration project. The MRCOG is a voluntary association of local governments and special units of government within State Planning and Development District No. 3, which is comprised of Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance and Valencia counties. Most of the member governments are located within the Middle Rio Grande Watershed. The MRCOG will work with the local governments in the Middle Rio Grande region to extend the benefits of water conservation to other municipal water systems. The communities involved in this project would include Belen, Bernalillo, Bosque Farms, Corrales, Los Lunas, and Rio Rancho.

As part of the Regional Water Plan, local governments are committed to adopting local water conservation plans. This project will speed that process by giving smaller communities the technical support they need to put a water conservation plan into place.

Goals

The principal goal of this project is a reduction in water use by communities in the Rio Grande region. Without an initial evaluation of existing conditions, it is difficult to quantify exactly what savings can be achieved, though we would establish as our goal a minimum of 10% reduction in municipal water use over a three-year period. To reach that goal, each local government would adopt and implement a comprehensive, long-range water conservation plan within eighteen months.

Water conservation plans can include utility conservation measures such as leak reduction, metering, pricing, and public information campaigns. Conservation measures aimed at consumers can include incentives for indoor and outdoor residential measures such as rebates for retrofitting high water use fixtures and appliances, for replacing high water use landscapes with low use landscaping, and for installation of "gray water", water-harvesting, or high-efficiency irrigation systems.

In addition to incentives, conservation plans can include mandates such as restrictions of sprinkler use, surcharges for higher-than-average consumption, restrictions on restaurant service, and water conservation education for hotel guests. Revised building codes can incorporate water conservation into all new construction and development.

Measurements

Success of the project will be measured in two ways: 1) by the number of local governments that have adopted and implemented a comprehensive water conservation plan; and 2) by measuring the quantity of water saved through those plans.

Benefits

The implementation of water conservation plans will provide both short- and long-term benefits for the communities themselves, for the Middle Rio Grande Basin and for the state as a whole. The primary benefit will be increased availability of water in a river that is currently over appropriated. The proposed conservation plans will put into place systems that could preserve our communities' viability and quality of life in case of prolonged drought conditions. The need for conservation continues as populations grow and nearby communities continue to draw down the aquifer. Water scarcity in the area has only been getting more severe with time. Water conservation plans are low-impact and would have no negative effect on the environment and are relatively effortless for end users of water. The water saved through such measures could be used to:

- Extend the life of the region's aquifers;
- Help New Mexico meet its compact obligations to Texas;
- Avert need to purchase additional water rights for municipal use; and
- Satisfy the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

Costs

The cost of implementing the project will amount to \$100,000.

Comments on this planning document may be sent to: Jim Baca, Trustee, NM Office of Natural Resources Trustee, 610 Gold Avenue SW, Suite 236, Albuquerque, NM 87102.