

**SANTA FE COUNTY
WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026
240 GRANT AVENUE, PLAZA CONFERENCE ROOM, 4:00 PM
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO**

1. OPENING BUSINESS

A. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Water Policy Advisory Committee was called to order by Shann Stringer, Chair, at 4:00 PM, on Thursday, January 8, 2026, in the Plaza Conference Room, 240 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, NM.

B. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Shann Stringer, Chair
Emily Wolf
Peter Gowen
Stephen Schmelling
Amy Jordan
John Kadlecek
Mike Henry
Commissioner Camilla Bustamante

MEMBERS ABSENT

Darrin Muenzberg
Jeff Montoya
James Mike Henry
Laird Graeser

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael Carr, Public Works Environmental Compliance Officer, Santa Fe County
Herbert Foster, Land Use Planner, Santa Fe County
Jacqueline Beam, Sustainability, Santa Fe County
Alexandra Ladd, Director, Growth Management Department
Leandro Cordova, Deputy County Manager, Santa Fe County
Brad Call, Emergency Management Director, Santa Fe County
Sara Smith, Operations Manager, County Managers Office, Santa Fe County

Carl Dickens, member of the community

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Gowen to approve the agenda as amended, and seconded by Chair Stringer to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

2. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. REQUEST APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 9, 2025 WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Gowen to approve the minutes of October 9, 2025 as amended, and seconded by Mr. Kadlecsek.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

B. REQUEST APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 13, 2025 WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Gowen to approve the minutes of November 13, 2025 and seconded by Mr. Kadlecsek.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

C. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made.

4. MATTERS FROM STAFF

County Planning Team Leader Herbert Foster stated he had reached out to a few WPAC members and other persons on the subject of land use maps and water use.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. PRESENTATION ON FLOOD CONTROL DAMS IN THE SANTA CRUZ

WATERSHED

It was stated by a Committee member that the Director of the Santa Fe County Office of Emergency Management was invited to attend this meeting to hear the presentation. He did not attend the beginning of the presentation.

Mr. Champe Green, Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil and Water Conservation District, gave a PowerPoint presentation that was included in the meeting packet. The presentation included the history and responsibilities of the Soil and Water Conservation District, review of a map showing the location of seven earthen dams whose construction began in 1962 and sponsored by the District, a description of the changes in the area since the dams were built, the status of the condition of the dams - particularly site 1, an explanation of the maintenance needed and the costs to do the rehabilitation of site 1, and the responsibility of the Soil and Water Conservation District who are the sponsors of the dams and responsible for them and a study that was done regarding the damage to the surrounding area should there be a breach. When the dams were built, they were considered low hazard dams because they were protecting agriculture land. Now they are considered high hazard because of all the housing and businesses in the area. If there was a breach it would affect the Espanola Wastewater Treatment Plant as well.

Chair Stringer stated that as the dams come up rehabilitation, before the process starts the dams could go for a FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) review and the flood control can be reverted back to storage for other uses.

Mr. Green stated that both Santa Fe County and Rio Arriba County have Offices of Emergency Management. An emergency action plan is produced and given to both offices, Homeland Security and the State Engineer's Office. Santa Fe County gives us \$8,000 a year for maintenance on the dams. It will take \$19 million to rehab the site 1 dam.

Commissioner Bustamante said the County Emergency Management Director should attend this meeting and she has reached out to the County Management about that.

Mr. Green gave details about the issues with the dam sites including sediment accumulation and said they have been working with NRCS to get site 1 rehabilitated for 15 years. They had a commitment for the full amount needed for site 1 and have the design done. Then Congress froze the Watershed Rehabilitation funds for FY 25 that SWCD were counting on. The budget that has been set for fiscal year 26 is \$3 million for all of the dams in the United States. Site 4 is also a problem as the dam has cracks in it. In the past, the State Engineer has stated that the site 1 dam is the most dangerous dam in New Mexico.

Commissioner Bustamante said Brad Call is on the line now. He is the County Emergency Manager.

Mr. Green said in Section 5 of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, Santa Fe County has redacted all of the information regarding the status of these dams. We don't agree with that and would like to know why it has been redacted from public view. Mr. Green said that the Growth Management Department previously helped the District produce inundation mapping for the dams.

Mr. Call said the redaction was done to prevent bad actors from taking advantage.

Commissioner Bustamante said she does not want to hear that anymore. It is a matter of the safety of the public.

Mr. Call said there is a statute that allows the redactions. He does not have a dog in this fight and would support revisiting that decision. We can look at the ramifications of this. He respects Commissioner Bustamante's thoughts on this and does not see an issue with revisiting the decision.

Mr. Green said this is what we wanted to make this Committee aware of. We also wanted to bring up the issue of early warning systems. It is a discussion we should be having.

There was discussion around the extent of the repairs that need to be made, the 60,000 tons of dirt that will need to be moved in the rehab process for site 1, regular monitoring of the dams - they are inspected once a year, the information on the County website from the Soil and Water District, and emergency spill ways.

A member of the Committee asked what we can do to support you.

Mr. Green said take what you have heard and talk with the Board of County Commission about your concerns. Thank you for listening.

There was discussion about what action could be taken to address this as soon as possible with the Commission.

Commissioner Bustamante said she and Brittany can work with you on language for a directive Resolution. We can put elements from this presentation in it as well.

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF WPAC 2025 PROGRESS REPORT AS REQUIRED BY RESOLUTION 2024-038 AND FOR PRESENTATION JANUARY 27TH TO THE BCC

Mr. Gowen said this draft report was presented at the December meeting. He explained minor edits made to the report since. If there are no additional changes or suggestions he would like for this to be approved.

Commissioner Bustamante said she thought this Committee had voted to support a Regional Water Authority. We looked at the minutes and did not find that there had been a vote. If not, she would like to see it included in WPAC tasks for 2026. That issue is a priority issue for the BCC and is moving forward in discussion.

A Committee member said that was considered by the Drinking Water Subcommittee. Staff suggested that we not include that as something we supported.

Commissioner Bustamante said it is a priority of the BCC. Staff is not in the position to remove it as a priority.

Mr. Gowen said we would have to amend the 2026 Work Plan to include that and have that approved by WPAC and then given to the BCC.

Commissioner Bustamante said we will bring a Resolution to your next meeting for you to decide to support this or not.

Ms. Beam said we were under the direction that support of regionalization needs to come from the BCC, not WPAC due to the "regional" language.

Commissioner Bustamante said it is the right thing to do. The County has been at the mercy of the City on these issues. We need to work together.

It was said that there is a reference to supporting regionalization in the Outreach Committee section of the work plan that quotes the 2014-103 Resolution and that we were told to ignore it.

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Gowen was made to approve the WPAC 2025 Progress Report and seconded by Chair Stringer.

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

B. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WPAC)

There was discussion and a motion was made regarding a revised method of electing the Chair and Vice Chair. There was discussion.

Legal Counsel stated that the only item noticed as an action item is the election of the Chair. You cannot take action on anything else at this time.

The motion was withdrawn.

It was decided to move forward with the election of Chair.

Mr. Gowen stated his interest in serving as Chair. There were no other nominations.

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Schmelling to elect Mr. Gowen as Chair of WPAC abs seconded by Mr. Kadlecek

VOTE The motion passed on a voice vote.

The discussion of a revised calendar of electing officers will be put on the next agenda.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. NEXT GENERATION WATER SUMMIT (NGWS) 2026

Ms. Beam said she spoke with the organizers this morning and passed on concern about paper water rights vs actual water rights. They said it will be a topic at the summit, but thought it would be boring. They asked if we could come up with another legal issue to add with the water rights issue to make it more dynamic. They also asked if the Committee prefers live or virtual speakers.

The Committee responded that they preferred live speakers and that adding another topic to the one they requested did not seem to be the best way to take care of a boring subject.

It was said that a presentation can be made to a general audience without getting into New Mexico water law.

Ms. Beam said there was also discussion regarding regionalization. The organization understands that this is a sensitive subject. They suggested that a private meeting between the City and the County be set up on the Wednesday prior to the Summit to discuss this issue.

Commissioner Bustamante said this needs to be cracked wide open. We need to get rid of the word regionalization and call it a unified authority. This needs to be discussed everywhere.

Ms. Beam said they are making progress on speakers.

8. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

9. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Several issues were brought up for an update including the status of new appointments to the Committee and having a meeting after the monthly meetings with the heads of the subcommittees and the staff liaisons.

Mr. Carr said appointments to the Committee are within the domain of the County Commission. If someone is interested they need to apply to the County and the County Commissioner who represents where they live. As to a standing meeting with the liaisons, that is a question for Andrew.

It was stated that the WaterSmart Program budget was announced today with a 70% cut to future grants. However, the Cooperative Watershed Management Program would still be funded and is inviting funding applications.

10. NEXT WPAC MEETING: FEBRUARY 12, 2026

11. CONCLUDING BUSINESS
A. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gowen asked if a motion would be made to adjourn, which was made by Mr. Schmelling and seconded by Emily Wolf.

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 pm.

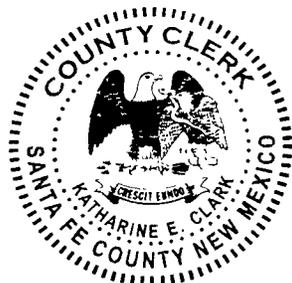
Peter Gowen

Shann Stringer, Chair
PETER GOWEN
[Signature]

Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer

COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss
WATER POLICY ADVISORY
PAGES: 24
I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 4TH Day Of March, 2026 at 09:45:37 AM
and Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 2078344
of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Deputy *[Signature]* _____
Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Katharine E. Clark
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM



January 8, 2026

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee
2025 Year End Summary Report Pursuant to Santa Fe County Resolution 2024-038

Introduction

This Summary Report highlights WPAC progress made on its 2025 Work Plan. It is responsive to the Santa Fe County Resolution 2024-038, paragraph 18 requirement which states: "At the Board's second meeting in January of each year, WPAC shall present to the Board for its approval a report of progress towards adopted goals from the previous year..." It subsumes the 4th Quarter Report.

Greater detail is presented in an addendum to this Summary Report.

WPAC approved its 2026 Work Plan on December 11, 2025. It is submitted under separate cover.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The Working Group (WG) received staff briefings on relevant programs, and continues to monitor progress of the consultants currently preparing reports on:

1. Suggested revisions and additions to the Sustainable Land Development Code related to water conservation, harvesting and reuse, stormwater management, and code requirements for new developments;
2. A Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Facility Master Plan and GSI Maintenance Training Guide.

The WG will review the consultant's work products once they become available.

DRINKING & WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The WG prepared a report regarding an application for wastewater service by La Pradera HOA pursuant to Resolution 2015-121. The report was approved by WPAC July 10, 2025. (Attachment 1)

The WG has prepared a concept for simplifying Resolution 2015-121, which was approved at the WPAC October 9, 2025 meeting. (Attachment 2) Background documents supporting this resolution, including suggested redline changes to Resolution 2015-121 and rationale for the changes can be found in the WPAC agenda package for the October 9, 2025 WPAC meeting.

The Working Group continues to monitor ongoing consultant and staff efforts regarding:

1. LC/LC PER/Water Planning Study & Rapid Watershed Assessment
2. PFAS study
3. Santa Fe 2100 Water Plan
4. Wastewater treatment plant return flow credits
5. Aquifer Storage Recovery at the Quill Plant
6. Domestic Well Monitoring Program

OUTREACH WORKING GROUP

The WG continues to confer with NM Environment Department, Office of State Engineer (OSE) and County staff, to coordinate reporting requirements and databases for septic tanks and domestic wells.

The WG continues to explore opportunities for development of educational materials and partnerships that promote watershed health and water conservation. Collaborations have begun with the 2026 Next Generation Water Summit, the OSE and the Santa Fe Watershed Association, and its recently awarded WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee
Addendum to 2025 Annual Summary Report
Pursuant to Santa Fe County Resolution 2024-038

PREAMBLE

This addendum supplements the WPAC Annual Summary Report for 2025, pursuant to Resolution 2024-038. It subsumes the 2025 4th Quarter Report.

INTRODUCTION

The WPAC 2025 Work Plan (Plan) was approved by the Board on January 28, 2025. The Plan identified three WPAC working groups, and assigned specific tasks to each group. Those working groups include: 1) Stormwater Management Working Group; 2) Drinking & Wastewater Management Working Group; and 3) Outreach Working Group.

This addendum describes Annual 2025 WPAC activities for each working group, by specific tasks.

In addition to working on Work Plan tasks, 2025 WPAC efforts included attending monthly WPAC meetings, preparing and presenting monthly status reports, preparing and presenting quarterly progress reports, and preparing and approving a 2026 Work Plan.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Task 1

Develop and present recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on revisions and additions to the Sustainable Land Development Code related to water conservation, harvesting and reuse, stormwater management, and code requirements for new developments.

2025 Activity

The main effort of this task is being undertaken by consultants. The Working Group (WG) began by hearing presentations from staff providing programmatic background. The WG continues to monitoring County Consultants' efforts on this project, and will provide comments when needed. The WG has discussed recommendations for the County to incorporate best management practices in new and ongoing construction projects that adjust to increasing localized, high-intensity storms. The WG has discussed initiating an assessment of the County's arroyos to identify opportunity to slow flood pulses, recharge the aquifer, and mitigate flood impacts. The WG is monitoring and supporting County efforts to encourage rainwater harvesting (barrels, rain gardens) and providing comments when needed. The WG is in the process of writing a comprehensive, bi-lingual notice to County residents (including water systems and mutual domestics) which outlines practices for water conservation. Finally, the WG is developing a plan to produce guidance for local water systems/users and community organizations to obtain funding (i.e. through the ICIP process).

Task 2

Develop a Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Facility Master Plan and GSI Maintenance Training Guide.

2025 Activity

The main effort of this task is being undertaken by consultants. The Working Group (WG) began by hearing presentations from staff providing programmatic background. The WG continues monitoring County Consultants' efforts on this project, and will provide comments when asked. The WG is monitoring the spring restoration planning project for La Cienega to determine its benefit as it may serve as a GSI demonstration project for other parts of the County. The WG has also begun assessing strategies (with plans to coordinate with the Outreach Working Group) to improve communication between County staff and leadership on other area planning efforts, such as the La Cienega spring restoration, the Santa Fe Watershed Association Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP), and City efforts.

Task 3

Review information to develop proposals for a County Compost Facility and Biogas Capture Project and provide recommendations to the BCC for inclusion in Planning considerations for County wastewater infrastructure expansion.

2025 Activity

Stormwater Management Working Group members received a staff briefing on current County practices for biosolids management and treated effluent, as well as staff's initial thoughts on possible wastewater management partnerships. It will continue to monitor efforts and provide comments when needed.

DRINKING & WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Task 1

Develop a framework for potential customers to efficiently navigate the process of connecting to the County utility system or requesting that the County take over an existing system. (Requires completion of an after-action report on Cañada de Los Alamos application and requires review and potential request to amend Resolution No. 2015-121.)

2025 Activity

The task leader prepared a concept report for simplifying the Resolution 2015-121 process under which existing Community Systems apply for connection to the County utility, and the application is reviewed and evaluated by WPAC, staff and the BCC. At the October 9 meeting, WPAC approved "Concepts for Reworking Resolution 2015-121 -Technical Assistance To Community Water and Wastewater Systems" (Concept Document). The intent is to simplify the process for owners of community water and wastewater systems seeking connection to the County utility by eliminating the current detailed "Preliminary Application"

and replacing it with a "Concept Plan". The Concept Plan would lay out concepts for proposed water and/or wastewater service. Application requirements for the Concept Plan would be flexible depending on the complexity of the proposal. It would be based on already available or easily ascertainable information. The presumption would be that a full traditional preliminary engineering report would not be required. The Concept Plan should not be burdensome for the applicant, but adequate for purposes of staff assessment of its conceptual technical feasibility. The Concept Plan should state the possible sources of funds for the proposal.

The detailed application process after approval of the Concept Plan would be more rigorous than it is at present.

Additional background materials were included in the Agenda Package for the October WPAC meeting including: 1) an analysis of how Resolution 2015-121 presently works; 2) an analysis of the current process for seeking water service from the County by new developments; 3) a detailed explanation of the underlying concept for the suggested changes; 4) rationale for the proposed changes; and 5) suggested redline changes to Resolution 2015-121.

A copy of the Concept Document is attached as Attachment 1 to this Addendum.

WPAC has completed this task. It is now up to County staff and elected officials to decide how to proceed.

Task 1A

Develop and present recommendations to the BCC for La Cienega/La Cieneguilla Drinking Water Contamination Mitigation. Including a bilingual, digital, and door-to-door survey. (Three-month timeline – present to BCC in late March/early April.) (Andrew Harnden)

2025 Activity

The WG reviewed and commented on a one-page, staff generated, community survey on immediate and long-term actions to mitigate groundwater contamination.

The WG continues to monitor the ongoing La Cienega/La Cieneguilla (LCLC) Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) /Water Planning Study and the monthly meetings conducted by the study consultants. The WG will review and comment on the consultants work product once it becomes available.

Task 2

Review PFAS report dealing with the extent of contamination, clean-up timeline, alternatives analysis, and advise the BCC on most efficient path forward.

2025 Activity

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

On September 18, 2025, the County consultant, INTERA, conducted a community meeting presenting its preliminary findings. The Working Group (WG) attended. No reviewable report has been produced to date, but the WG will review and comment on the report once it is released.

On November 20, 2025, a second community was held at the La Cienega Community Center informing PFAS impacted residents of the short-term State response to PFAS contaminated groundwater. The State of New Mexico is taking the lead on responding to the emergency public health crisis. It will be providing either whole house or point of use filters for residents in the most impacted area as a short-term fix, while long-term remediation is considered.

WPAC will continue to monitor activity in this matter.

Task 3

Review policy, procedures, and enforcement for a Countywide Domestic Well Monitoring Program.

2025 Activity

The Working Group has reviewed the county's La Cienega / La Cieneguilla Well Monitoring Program Pilot report and Phase 2 Work plan, and met with County staff in July to discuss lessons learned and receive updates on the current plan. The WG is waiting to see a revised draft of the Phase 2 Work Plan for the Santa Fe County Domestic Well Monitoring Program; when available, the WG will review the draft and support County staff in developing the concepts for the program.

Task 4

Santa Fe 2100 Water Plan - Work with the City of Santa Fe to prepare for the growth and expansion of infrastructure and increased water demand.

2025 Activity

At the February 13, 2025 WPAC meeting, City of Santa Fe Water Resources Planner, Steve Shultz, summarized the "Systems Tool for Evaluating Water Resource Decisions and Strategies" (STEWaRDS) model being developed as part of the long-range planning process. The WG continues to monitor development of the STEWaRDS model.

The WG also attended a presentation on the status of the City's water system at the May meeting of the City of Santa Fe's Water Conservation Committee, as well as attending the Next Generation Water Summit, sponsored by the City of Santa Fe's Water Conservation Office.

Two important developments are: (1) that the City is going ahead with plans for the return flow pipeline, and (2) is rebuilding both the Nichols Reservoir and the McClure Reservoir in the next two years. The return flow pipeline will decrease the amount of water being discharged from the wastewater treatment plant into the Santa Fe River, which will, in turn, decrease the flow in the lower Santa Fe River. The impact of this decrease is not currently known.

The following tasks will be considered as time and information become available:

Task 5

Pursue petition return-flown credit application

2025 Activity

Review of paragraph 8 of the Amended and Restated Water Resources Agreement (WRA) between the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County, signed by the County December 13, 2016 and by the City on December 14, 2016, reveals that the County has no right to any return flow from the City's wastewater treatment plant. In order for the County to pursue return flow credits, the WRA would need to be amended.

County and City staffs are engaged in discussions dealing with return flow credits from their respective wastewater treatment plants. WPAC has not been invited to participate in these discussions, and thus has no role in them, other than to encourage them. Should the respective staffs agree on a proposal, WPAC is ready, willing and able to review and comment on it.

Task 6

Promote Aquifer Storage Recovery (ASR) at the Quill Plant.

2025 Activity

Staff has been working on this ongoing project with a consultant. The WG has not been engaged with this task.

Task 7

Solicit community representation and engagement regarding the scope of work considerations during the project development phase.

2025 Activity

WPAC has not engaged in this effort in 2025.

OUTREACH WORKING GROUP

Task 1

Recommend the initiation for developing a Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs) with the City of Santa Fe for stormwater and wastewater management.

2025 Activity

Initial efforts on this task involved the drafting of a proposed a Plan of Action (Plan) by the task leader for completing this task. The Plan assumed that the Working Group would

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

assemble background information on both the stormwater and wastewater programs of both the County and the City. Under the Plan, once WPAC understood the operation of each program, it would discuss with staff, strengths and weaknesses of each program and explore opportunities for both internal improvements and potential improvements that could be achieved through joint or coordinated operations with the City. If County staff and WPAC were to conclude that an intergovernmental agreement regarding stormwater and wastewater management between the County and City could be beneficial, a written conceptual proposal would be prepared and vetted by the full WPAC. The Plan suggested follow-up processes.

Staff rejected active WPAC engagement in exploring potential JPA's with the City for stormwater and wastewater management. WPAC action on this task has been suspended at staff's request.

As part of the effort on this task, the task leader discovered Resolution 2014-103, titled "A Resolution Endorsing the Concept of Regionalization of Water and Wastewater Services for and Withing Santa Fe County". It states:

The Board invites the City of Santa Fe and other legal entities that provide water and wastewater services within the Santa Fe area to determine the mutual level of interest and ultimate benefits in pursuing the water and wastewater authority concept to operate and maintain water and wastewater utilities in Santa Fe County within a site-specific area in the vicinity of Santa Fe.

Upon calling Resolution 2014-103 to the attention of staff, the task leader was advised to ignore it.

Task 2

Support efforts for more cooperation/coordination with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) (1) to require NMED to update and share its septic tank database with the County and require septic permit applicants to submit to County before NMED and (2) to require OSE to update GIS mapping to show well-head meter diversion points so the County can better estimate water use per acre.

2025 Activity

The WG has downloaded well data from NM Water Data and began effort to locate wells by latitude, longitude, or neighborhood, and well age. This is preparatory to revising the methodology for determining domestic well withdrawals and, assuming that domestic wells are associated with septic systems, may provide insight on shallow groundwater recharge.

The WG has obtained shape files for arroyos and other water courses. It has also downloaded the 2020 water withdrawals study from NM Tech and has extracted the Santa Fe County data and shared this study and the previous comparable studies with the full WPAC.

The WG has initiated contact with Legislative Finance Committee analyst for NM Environment Department and NM Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department.

Additionally, the WG has started contacting NM Tech, Office of State Engineer, and the Water Quality Bureau at NM Environment Department to discover available data.

Task 3

Develop educational materials and partnerships that promote watershed health and water conservation.

2025 Activity

A meeting occurred between Working Group task leader John Kadlecek, with Santa Fe Watershed Association (SFWA) Executive Director, Mori Hensley. Ms Hensley expressed a willingness to share materials and partner with the county to meet the objectives of this task. Afterwards, she spoke with SFWA director of education, who confirmed that SFWA could most easily offer support to WPAC and the County in terms of curriculum training and design, expanding any of their existing programs to other areas of the County outside of the Santa Fe watershed, or serving as a strategic partner in identifying educational priorities and then designing programs accordingly.

Ms Hensley noted that the county has no specific water conservation office or people dedicated to working only on that. She also suggested working with the City's Office of Water Conservation. The Working Group will continue to explore possibilities with the SFWA and the City for meeting these objectives.

Task 4

Support Primacy of surface waters in the state.

2025 Activity

The legislature passed SB-21 in its regular 2025 legislative session. This bill authorizes the creation of state discharge permit system administered by the NMED, equivalent to the NPDES program currently administered by USEPA. With statutory action complete, the next step is rulemaking by the NMED. This process will go forward without regard to WPAC or Santa Fe County engagement. WPAC has not been actively engaged in this matter, nor will it continue to engage with this task.

The following tasks will be considered as time and information become available:

Task 5

Develop maps and a database of all NMED-approved septic systems and wells, arroyos, and rain garden/catchment areas in Santa Fe County.

2025 Activity

Work has begun to evaluate the data sources available for this task, including GIS shapefiles and point source data.

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

Task 6

Develop a guideline/information packet for communities to form 501(c)(3) watershed associations.

2025 Activity

The task leader prepared a narrative on forming watershed related non-profit corporations under New Mexico law called "Comments on Forming Nonprofit Watershed Associations". This was presented to the full WPAC on March 13, 2025 and approved as full satisfaction of this work plan task.

The document was attached to the WPAC 1st Quarterly Report as Attachment 3, and is posted on the WPAC web page.

Task 7

Support strategies with USDA NRCS to increase agricultural producers' awareness of Soil Health Program.

2025 Activity

WPAC did not engage with this task in 2025.

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee

Report on the La Pradera Homeowners Association Application for Retail Wastewater Service
Pursuant to Santa Fe County Resolution 2015-121

INTRODUCTION

This is the Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) report mandated by Santa Fe County Resolution 2015-121 (Resolution 2015-121) in response to the application (Application) of La Pradera Homeowners Association (La Pradera) for retail wastewater service from Santa Fe County. La Pradera seeks connection to the County wastewater collection network and treatment of its wastewater at the County wastewater treatment plant. La Pradera expects to retire its current wastewater treatment plant, but convey its collection system to the County. Its customers seek retail wastewater service from the County. It already receives retail water service from the County.

PROCEDURAL POSTURE

La Pradera submitted its Preliminary Application (Application) for wastewater service to the county on November 15, 2024. The Application was presented to WPAC at its June 12, 2025 meeting. Public Works – Utility Division staff stated during that meeting that the Application satisfied a completeness review as required by Resolution 2015-121, Paragraph III,B,5,c.

APPLICANT BACKGROUND

La Pradera is a New Mexico domestic nonprofit corporation which acts as the homeowners' association for the La Pradera Subdivision. It is successor in interest to a developer entity known as La Pradera Reclamation Plant, Inc. La Pradera owns and operates a permitted wastewater treatment plant and related collection and discharge infrastructure. The treatment plant is challenged to consistently meet discharge permit requirements, and operates under a corrective action plan from NM Environmental Department. La Pradera proposes to retire its plant, dedicate the wastewater collection system to Santa Fe County, and connect to the County wastewater system.

COMMUNITY SYSTEM AT ISSUE

Because La Pradera proposes to retire its wastewater treatment plant, those assets will not be described here.

Enclosure 6 of the Application depicts engineering drawings for its collection system. The Application contains no assessment of the condition of the internal collection. This will have to be performed before a final agreement can be reached between La Pradera and the County.

PROPOSED PLAN

La Pradera proposes to connect its collection system to a planned County interceptor that has yet to be built. The interceptor is in its final design stage. Absent details of the County interceptor, La Pradera's Preliminary Application can only be considered a concept plan.

PERTINENT APPLICATION INFORMATION

Resolution 2015-121 specifies information required of applications for county water service. That includes the following (Parenthetical statements in the list below indicate the location in the Application responsive to each requirement, except where otherwise noted):

1. Financial information concerning the community system for the current and previous three fiscal years. (Enclosure 2)

Enclosure 2 provides financial information for all functions of La Pradera. The statements do not specifically break out information for the operation of the wastewater collection and treatment system. La Pradera estimates 22% of its revenues are allocated to its wastewater system.

La Pradera's financial statements shed no light as to expected costs of operating its wastewater collection system that it expects to convey to the County as part of its proposal. This question awaits further analysis.

2. A general technical description of the community system (Enclosure 4)

Enclosure 4 describes: 1) the treatment and effluent discharge system; 2) warranty deed under which La Pradera took possession of its real property; and 3) bill of sale under which La Pradera took possession of personal property. The description of the treatment and discharge system is not germane to this proposal under which La Pradera expects to abandon the treatment portion of the system. The collection system is depicted in the engineering drawings provided in Enclosure 6.

For purposes of this Report, WPAC assumes the deed and bill of sale accurately state what they purport to be.

3. A general description of water rights

Water rights are not relevant to this Application. La Pradera receives retail water service from the County.

4. A map of the service area of the community system, number and location of service connections and supply sources, and supply and demand characteristics.

Attachment 1
Addendum to 2025 Annual Summary Report
Page 3 of 5

The collection system is depicted and mapped in the engineering drawings provided in Enclosure 6. The Application lists the connections to the collection system. From that information, wastewater treatment demand can be calculated. Additionally, influent, effluent and treatment volume information is provided in quarterly reports to NM Environmental Department. (See Enclosure 5.)

5. Copies of any technical reports or preliminary engineering reports completed within the last five years.

Portions of a report on the La Pradera WWTP – On-site Training and Technical Assistance Report are included as Enclosure 7 of the Application. This deals primarily with the operation of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). It includes a recommendation to abandon the WWTP and connect to the County collection system.

- 6 Current rate schedule:

The Application does not include the current rate structure. This information should be submitted. However, because the rate structure includes costs of wastewater treatment, it is not reflective of expected costs of maintaining the current collection system.

- 7 Information concerning compliance with relevant state and federal health and environmental laws.

La Pradera's groundwater discharge permit has expired, but has been administratively extended. La Pradera is operating under a corrective action plan imposed by NM Environmental Department. Permit details and the corrective action plan can be found in Enclosure 5.

Ongoing issues concerning discharge permit violations would be resolved if La Pradera's Application and related proposal are approved and constructed.

- 8 System financial statements

La Pradera's financial statements are presented in Enclosure 2.

Review and analysis by WPAC concludes that the Application is preliminary in nature, lacks specifics necessary to commit County funds, but adequate for purposes of consideration of the concept of La Pradera to connect to the County's wastewater collection and treatment system and to abandon its WWTP.

WPAC RECOMMENDATION

The WPAC recommends approval of the concept of La Pradera's Preliminary Application for retail wastewater service from Santa Fe County, with the understanding that much work remains to be done. The project is not ripe for commitment of County funds. WPAC further recommends that the County and La Pradera proceed with a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) memorializing their mutual understandings regarding the project, and proceed with the project.

The rationale for the WPAC decision is as follows:

1. La Pradera currently has a critical wastewater treatment problem related to its noncompliance with its groundwater discharge permit. Construction of a planned County wastewater interceptor in the area which could reasonably serve La Pradera, presents an opportunity to resolve this La Pradera problem. The current design for the interceptor incorporates anticipated flows from La Pradera.
2. The County's WWTP has the ability to treat La Pradera's wastewater. The WWTP is designed to be incrementally expanded as the need arises. The County expects to accommodate increased connections in the area naturally tributary to its WWTP. La Pradera's participation in the County's wastewater collection and treatment system conforms with sound engineering practice.

SUGGESTED CONDITIONS OF ACQUISITION

1. The County must proceed with the design and construction of the interceptor intended to collect La Pradera's wastewater. The design must incorporate the ability of La Pradera to connect its collection system.
2. The costs of engineering and construction of the connection infrastructure between La Pradera's collection system and the County's interceptor should be borne by La Pradera.
3. La Pradera's retail customers must pay their fair share of the WWTP capital costs of the capacity they consume in the form of a tap fee.

TIMELINE

The timeline of this project depends on County design and construction of its interceptor transmitting La Pradera's wastewater to the County's WWTP. WPAC approval at this point is restricted to the concept incorporated into the Application. Further timing of this project is not possible to establish at this time.

REQUIRED COUNTY EXPENDITURES

At this preliminary stage of this project, expenditures by either La Pradera or the County have not been determined, nor are they ascertainable. Approval of the project's concept, should not imply a County commitment to expend an amount certain for this project. County expenditures for this project should follow standard capital improvement authorization procedures. This approval in no way commits County expenditures for this project.

DIVERGENCE OF (OR ADDITIONAL) OPINIONS REGARDING THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION.

(All portions of this Report above this section were fully vetted and approved unanimously by the full WPAC. The comments below were not fully vetted by the full WPAC, and have not been endorsed by the full WPAC. They are comments from individuals who want to bring specific related matters to the attention of the Board of County Commissioners.)

None.

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

Attachment 2
Addendum to 2025 Annual Summary Report
Page 1 of 3

Proposed Concept for Amending Resolution 2015-121

1. Concept Plan.

The primary focus of the changes is to simplify the current requirements for a preliminary application and instead convert it to a "Concept Plan" (Plan). In the Plan, applicants would lay out its concept for proposed water and/or wastewater service. Application requirements for the Concept Plan would be flexible depending on the complexity of the proposal. It would be based on already available or easily ascertainable information. The presumption would be that a full traditional preliminary engineering report would not be required. The Plan should not be burdensome for the applicant, but adequate for purposes of staff assessment of its conceptual technical feasibility. The Concept plan should state the possible sources of funds for the proposal.

2. Pre-Application Meeting

The proposal encourages (but does not require) a pre-application meeting between an applicant and staff. The applicant would present its conceptual proposal. Staff would consider the expected technical and financial feasibility of the project, and counsel the applicant as to whether or how to proceed.

3. Concept Plan Review

The Plan would be presented first to the County Manager for completeness and preliminary staff comments. Once County staff is satisfied with the completeness of the Plan, it would transmit the Plan along with staff comments to WPAC its for consideration.

WPAC would consider the Concept Plan at a public meeting. The consideration would consist of the applicant's presentation, staff comments, public comments, and preliminary WPAC deliberations. WPAC could ask questions of the applicant and staff at any time. Deliberations on the Concept Plan may be continued so WPAC can prepare a final written Report, to be approved at a subsequent meeting. Plan review by WPAC would be in the nature of whether the proposal is consistent with county policies and objectives. This high level review is consistent with WPAC operating at the policy level. WPAC would either approve the Plan as presented, approve it with conditions, return it to the Applicant for addition information, or disapprove it.

After WPAC approval, the Plan would proceed to hearing before the BCC. The BCC would retain full discretion to either accept, approve with conditions, or reject the Plan. BCC approval of the Plan would not be a commitment for funding, but rather authorization for the project to continue through the process.

4. Memorandum of Understanding

Upon BCC Plan approval, the applicant and County staff would develop an operational plan for how the applicant should proceed with completing its final application. This would be in the nature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). County staff would have broad latitude as to the content and level of detail contained in the MOU. The proposed MOU could be presented to WPAC for its review and comments, but formal WPAC approval would not be required. Once agreed upon by the parties,

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

Attachment 2
Addendum to 2025 Annual Summary Report
Page 2 of 3

the applicant would proceed with the application process as agreed in the MOU. County staff would prepare to incorporate the project into the County's capital improvement planning process to the extent possible without having reliable financial costs.

Once the MOU is consummated, the Applicant would proceed as agreed. County staff would be available for consultation and guidance during the process.

5. Final Application

Once an applicant has completed all preliminaries for and requirements for a final application, the application would be submitted to the County Manager. Final application requirements would be much the same as that now required by Resolution 2015-121, supplemented by any improvements staff would like to include during the Resolution 2015-121 revision process. Staff would perform a completeness review, and then forward the Application, along with staff comments to WPAC, for its review, and consideration.

6. Approval Process

The WPAC review for the Final Application would focus on the policy implications of the application and need not involve itself with detailed engineering considerations. The WPAC meeting process would be conducted similar to that of its review of the Concept Plan. WPAC would prepare a report to the BCC covering its findings, recommendations, any conditions of approval, and rationale for its recommendations.

The approved WPAC report would be submitted to the BCC similar to what exists today under Resolution 2015-121. Approval by BCC would be expected to include authorization for County expenditures.

7. Miscellaneous Changes

- A. The definition of "Acquisition Agreement" would no longer include language of valuation of purchase price. The County would not be buying the Community System. The useful system assets would be considered in-kind contributions to offset the cost of connection.
- B. The application deadline of November 15 is eliminated, along with the March 1 deadline for staff to transmit its comments to the BCC.
- C. Staff transmittal of the Concept Plan application and final application for WPAC review would include staff's written comments.
- D. Final application contents are to include projected operation and maintenance costs; a proposed financing plan; and proposed terms of Acquisition Agreement.
- E. Purchase price has been dropped from the requirements of an Acquisition Agreement.

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026

Attachment 2
Addendum to 2025 Annual Summary Report
Page 3 of 3

Conclusion

Approval by WPAC of this concept for changes to the Resolution 2015-121 process is a recommendation to consider changes and is not intended to limit staff or BCC discretion on what changes should be made and implemented.

Attachments

The following documents are offered as background information to this memo requesting full WPAC action approving the Concepts for Reworking Resolution 2015-121. They are included for convenience, and are not integral to the approval request.

1. Analysis of Resolution 2015-121 - (dated 2025-08-28)
This is an explanation of how Resolution 2015-121 presently works.
2. Analysis of Current Process for Seeking Water Service From County (dated March 27,2025)
This explains the process for new developments to connect to the County utility
3. Preliminary Concepts for Reworking SFC Resolution 2015-121 (dated 2025-08-28)
This describes the underlying concept and includes details on the content of application for pre-application meeting, Concept Plan, and MOU
4. Rationale for Suggested Edits (dated 2025-08-04)
This explains why the modifications are proposed.
5. Suggested Redline Revisions to Resolution 2015-121 (dated 2025-08-28)
6. Resolution 2015-121 (as adopted)

SFC CLERK RECORDED 03/04/2026