Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee
2025 3rd Quarter Summary Report Pursuant to Santa Fe County Resolution 2024-038

Introduction

This Summary Report highlights WPAC progress made on its 2025 Work Plan in the 3rd Quarter of 2025. It is responsive to the Santa Fe County Resolution 2024-038, paragraph 19 requirement which states: "WPAC shall present a report of its activities and recommendations to the Board on a quarterly schedule…" for the third quarter of 2025.

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

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The Working Group (WG) 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.

The WG has prepared a concept for simplifying Resolution 2015-121, which will be presented for approval at the WPAC October 9, 2025 meeting.

The Working Group continues to monitor 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 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 3rd Quarter Summary Report
Pursuant to Santa Fe County Resolution 2024-038

PREAMBLE

This addendum supplements the WPAC Summary Report for the 3rd Quarter 2025, pursuant to Resolution 2024-038.

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 3rd Quarter 2025 WPAC activities for each working group, by specific tasks.

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.

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

The Working Group (WG) is 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. Finally, 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.

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

The WG continues to monitor the County Consultants' effort on this project and will review and comment on the report when it becomes available. 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 Country. 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.

3rd Quarter 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 Caňada de Los Alamos application and requires review and potential request to amend Resolution No. 2015-121.)

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

The task leader has prepared a concept 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. This concept was presented for discussion to the WPAC at its September meeting, along with background material on: 1) how Resolution 2015-121 presently works; 2) the process by which new developments to connect to the County utility; 3) the underlying concept and details on the proposed process; 4) rationale for proposed changes; 5) suggested redline changes to Resolution 2015-121; and 6) the full text of the current Resolution. The concept proposal will be presented to WPAC for action at the October 9, 2025 WPAC meeting.

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)

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

The Working Group (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.

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

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.

Task 3

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

3rd Quarter 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**.*

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

The Working Group continues to monitor development of the "Systems Tool for Evaluating Water Resource Decisions and Strategies" (STEWaRDS) model.

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

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

County and City staff are conferring on how to pursue return flow credits from treated effluent. WPAC will review and comment on any work product developed by staff.

Task 6

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

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

Staff is working on this ongoing project with a consultant. The WG is not engaged currently with this task.

Task 7

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

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

No WPAC member is participating on this task at this time.

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.

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

WPAC action on this task has been suspended at staff's request.

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.

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

The Working Group (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.

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

A meeting occurred between Working Group task leader 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 their 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.

Mori 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.

3rd Quarter 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 participation. 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.

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

Work has begun to evaluate the data sources available for this task, including GIS shapefiles and point source data. Additional work will be performed in the next quarter.

Task 6

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

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

This task was completed in March 2025.

Task 7

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

3rd Quarter 2025 Activity

WPAC is not working on this task at this time.