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DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINES

Public Lands Department

Ray Petersen, Administrator

May 30, 2006

Dear Interested Party,

The Emery County Public Lands Department is sponsoring a presentation by Paige Grant, Hydrologist with Watershed West based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her presentation will be held in the Courthouse on Main Street in Castle Dale in Room # 207 at 10:00 AM on Thursday, June 22nd. Please plan to attend and invite others that may be interested.

A number of conditions over the past fifty or so years have combined to create an undesirable situation within the watersheds of Western Emery County. These watersheds lie mostly on land administered by the U.S. Forest Service. Fire suppression, drought and insect infestation are some of the contributing factors which may devastate the water sources of our communities. While it is easy to assign blame to the Forest Service and demand that the agency repair the damage, we believe the current situation is too critical to resort to finger pointing.

Accompanying statements explain the presentation. We invite you to come and participate, as a citizen concerned for the health of our Forest and Watershed.

Sincerely,



Bruce Wilson

Chair, Emery County Public Lands Council

A Water Quality Disaster Averted: Collaborative Forestry and the Clean Water Act

Most 319 success stories have to do with muddy streams running clear or raging storm hydrographs tamed to sustained flows. The Santa Fe Watershed Project is about a clear stream that still runs clear, protected from the impacts of crown fire through a fuel reduction project designed to achieve ecosystem restoration; and it's about the community/ government partnership that made it possible.

In 1998, Santa Fe National Forest issued an open invitation to the Santa Fe community to learn about the challenges of managing the municipal watershed, from which the City of Santa Fe obtains about 40% of its drinking water supply. The Santa Fe Watershed Association responded to the Forest Service invitation, and wound up involved in a partnership that oversaw development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a fuel reduction project in the municipal watershed. A 319 grant helped to support SFWA in its role of studying the issues, engaging in outreach to the community, and representing community concerns back to Forest Service planners. The lion's share of the grant went to the Forest Service to implement the treatments described in the EIS. As a direct result of the collaborative process, the EIS for the Santa Fe Watershed project sailed through its appeal process. The project has received earmarked funding for three years running, and it is ahead of schedule, with more area planned for treatment than was originally thought possible. The project has been monitored intensively and extensively, and SFWA has reported the results of monitoring to the Forest Service and the general public, as well as making recommendations for adjustments in the way the treatments have been conducted. We have learned to take a broad approach to adaptive management: not just to wait for indisputable trends to develop in the monitoring data that would indicate a need for a change in treatment approach, but rather to let the monitoring process hone the powers of observation of those involved so that adjustments can be made before all the data are in. And we have learned to work with people with whom we do not always agree, with a sense of shared purpose and respect. According to Congressman Udall, Regional Forester Harv Forsgren, and Diane Vosick, Associate Director of the Ecological Research Institute at Northern Arizona University, the project is recognized nationally as an example of effective collaborative community forestry.

For more information go to www.santafewatershed.org

Paige Grant is hydrologist with the engineering/hydrology consulting firm of Watershed West, based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She holds a B.A. degree in Ecology and an M.S. in Watershed Management. Following a stint with the Peace Corps and other international environmental programs, she arrived in Santa Fe in 1982 and hasn't strayed far since. She has practiced hydrology with state and federal government agencies and several consulting firms, as well as putting in a couple of sessions as analyst of environmental and water-related bills for the state legislature. She co-authored *Living Within Our Means* (NM Environmental Law Center, 1992), a critique of State Engineer Office policies and practices; *Water and Growth in the Santa Fe Area* (Thaw Charitable Trust, 1995), and a number of other technical and popular reports and articles on water management issues. In 1997 she founded the Santa Fe Watershed Association, served as its Executive Director until 2003, and now keeps a hand in with the organization as Senior Scientist.