



# City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

200 Lincoln Avenue, P.O. Box 909, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504-0909

David Coss, *Mayor*

**Councilors:**

Rebecca Wurzburger, Mayor Pro Tem, Dist. 2

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May 13, 2010

Pamela Dupzyk  
Santa Fe Watershed Association  
1413 Second Street, Suite 3  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

RE: Proposed Santa Fe River Rerouting Project in the Two-Mile Pond Area

Dear Ms. Dupzyk,

We at the Water Division remain committed to cooperating with the Santa Fe Watershed Association, as well as the numerous other entities, that are working toward a living Santa Fe River. Because there are so many moving parts to this system, one of staff's jobs, as directed by the mayor, is to see that the various efforts fit together by first focusing on an overall River Plan and by finding ways in which the many current and proposed projects can work synergistically.

As staff's email on 3/29/2010 stated, we are pleased that some of our water legal questions regarding your proposed Santa Fe River relocation/restoration project near Two-Mile Pond have been answered by the Office of the State Engineer (OSE). The answers in the OSE letter provide the Water Division more information and allow us to focus on getting policy guidance from the City's elected officials. However, we need more information from you before we are able to present a complete picture to the elected officials.

I believe overall policy question before the elected officials is whether the relocation of the Santa Fe River near Two-Mile pond is a resource priority at this time. The costs in terms of expenditures, staff time, and limited water need to be considered not only in light of the many needs of the river and the City's downstream obligations, but also against the other goals that Water Division's resources have been allocated towards.

Some of the specific issues that the elected officials will need to consider are:

**Is the City willing and/or able to spend an estimated \$10,000-\$40,000 in order to mitigate some of the impacts to the existing facilities that the proposed project will likely incur?**

The cost estimates are derived from: a) the anticipated need to safeguard (relocate?) multiple transmission and distribution pressure-reducing and shut-off valves currently in the old filter plant that will likely be flooded by 10+ cfs flows, and b) restoring and maintaining a functioning Two-Mile pond drain pipe in order to restore the original flood-mitigation capacity of the



structure. In addition, we also anticipate increased staff time associated with both of these impacts. There may be other increased costs to the Water Division to resolve as yet undefined problems that may occur as a result of this project.

**Would the City like to see water that is being bypassed for the living river consumed and infiltrated in the proposed project reach or instead targeted for downstream restoration areas, including initiatives funded by the City?** As you know, in our region water is a scarce resource. If, for example, the proposed project decreases downstream flow by 0.1 cfs for six months every year (because of evapotranspiration and increased infiltration losses), about 35 acre-feet water less would make it downstream potentially having adverse impact to other restoration efforts.

**Does the City want to invest some resources at this time while recognizing the magnitude of resources needed to bring the project to full completion?** Staff understands that in order to complete the entire project, the City will need to construct a new bridge on Cerro Gordo Road across the Santa Fe River, demolish the old filter plant, relocate the transmission and distribution equipment in the filter plant, and likely re-engineer the breached Two-Mile dam. None of these large-ticket items are currently included in the Water Division's 10-yr Finance Plan and therefore would need governing body approval and could have implications on water rates.

Staff plans to bring this proposed project forward to the Public Utilities Committee (PUC) as soon as we receive the following information from you:

- the flow parameters of the most recent river relocation structure
- a summary of the an operational understanding you have reached with the Cerro Gordo Ditch Association that identifies the rate and timing of flow that would continue in the exiting river channel to meet the acequia's water right delivery needs.
- a copy of the Corps of Engineer 404 permit
- a plan on how you will comply with the OSE's requirement that no additional storage occur as a result of this project.
- confirmation of our working assumption that the pipes from the concrete weir will not be used for water movement to Two-Mile pond hence forth.

Once staff has the requested material, staff is available to work with you on the content of the PUC packet material so that it best represents the nuts and bolts of the project, the potential benefits, and impacts.

Recognizing that this project has evolved over time from SFWA's initial proposal to reroute the less than 2 cfs flows to Two-Mile pond from the existing underground pipes to an above ground channel to the current proposal to reroute the Santa Fe River, our staff has brainstormed a few other alternatives to your proposal that may include other ways to achieve the goal of increased habitat restoration in the Two-Mile pond area. These include: 1) building a rerouting structure that contains more flow flexibility coupled with a cooperatively-designed operational plan that shares the water between the two channels based, in part, on hydrologic conditions, 2) enhancing the geomorphology of the current Santa Fe River channel, 3) using the Two Mile Pond area to store high spring runoff flows allowing the water to be released downstream over the drier summer and fall, and 4) broadening the restoration goal from native trout habitat to other

varieties of native fish that may be more achievable. Staff would be happy to discuss the alternatives identified above as well as any others with you at your convenience.

Staff remains committed to working through the various aspects of this proposed project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Snyder', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian K. Snyder, PE  
Interim Public Utilities Department Director

Cc: Matt O'Rielly, Land Use Department Director  
Chris Ortega, Public Works Department Director  
Brian Drypolcher, Santa Fe River Coordinator  
Wendy Blackwell, Technical Review Division Director  
Jim Salazar, Manager, Storm Water Division Director