

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER ASSEMBLY

**17TH ASSEMBLY: *Managing the River to Failure --
Is There A Better Way?***

Saturday, October 22, 2016 ★ 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. ★ Dane Smith Hall, UNM

Finding Solutions for Our Water Management Shortfalls

The Rio Grande is a stressed river. Demands already equal or exceed its capacity. How will additional promises for new water users and uses be met, even if river flows remained as they have been? Such commitments do not adequately consider the implications of either historical fluctuations (century-scale droughts) or climate change (warming) effects.

Accepted by all of the local governments in the region, the Water Assembly's 1999 Regional Water Budget revealed that annually, we ran a large average deficit between the water coming into our region and that leaving. The 2014 draft Water Budget Update showed a similar-sized deficit because, despite the many conservation efforts, river flows had declined as well. But now we've picked the low-hanging fruit. Such a deficit has many ramifications, with choices becoming starker as additional users and uses rely on a shrinking river.

Understanding these ramifications is the first step to getting a handle on our future. Residents of the region are entitled to be informed and involved in the choices and tradeoffs for making water management decisions along with the development and implementation of policies and actions. That cannot occur without a realistic understanding of the constraints, issues and problems our scarce water resources currently face, as well as what climate disruption projections mean.

Such information is not easily available so this conference is aimed at countering that. The first half of the program will include discussion of major water management constraints, impending trigger events, and classic large system failures, including planning and decision-making failures, inadequate or ignored rules, and poor accounting or ignored physical reality. Then we shift to solutions. The keynote address will be followed by a panel of experts who will quickly present ideas as to how we might resolve, mitigate, or alleviate some of the problems. Then, participants will engage in an extended discussion of strategies to move forward. Those, in turn, will be taken to the Assembly's Board to discuss further steps.

This annual event is also when participants are invited to join the Assembly and elect representatives of different interests to the Board. Grass-roots based, the Assembly has always sought public participation in a variety of ways as well as sound scientific analysis. The Assembly's purpose is to ensure effective implementation of the Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan through an open, inclusive, and participatory process so as to achieve a sustainable water future that balances water use with renewable supply in accordance with the stated goals of the Plan and in the common interests of the people and stakeholders in the region. Please join us!

The Water Assembly is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. As a non-profit organization, we certainly welcome donations!
Water Assembly, P.O. Box 25862, Albuquerque, NM 87125-5862, www.WaterAssembly.org

AGENDA

Setting the Stage

- 9:00 Welcome
John Fleck, UNM Water Resources Program Director
- 9:10 Introduction
Bob Wessely, Water Assembly President
- 9:20 Background - where we find ourselves today
Elaine Hebard, Water Assembly Vice President
- 9:35 Why We Need to get Better at Local Politics
Sterling Grogan, Ecologist with Carpe Diem

Limitations and Threats

- 9:45 Five Laws that Won't Change: Is that a Problem?
Reed Benson, UNM Water Law Professor
Comments, Questions & Answers
- 10:10 Impending Train Wrecks
Tom Luebben, Tribal Law Attorney
Comments, Questions & Answers
- 10:40 Break

Classic Large System Failures

- 10:55 Planning and Decision-Making Failures
Michael Jensen, Long Time River Advocate,
Former MRG Urban Waters Ambassador
- 11:05 Inadequate or Ignored Rules
Janet Jarratt, Farmer & Former Chair of the MRGCD
- 11:20 Après nous le déluge *or* Thumbing our Collective Nose
at the Future.
Phil King, NUMSU Water Resources &
Agricultural Engineering Professor
Comments, Questions and Answers

Working Lunch

- 11:50 Process for Election of Water Assembly Directors
Bob Wessely, Water Assembly President
- 12:00 Lunch and Elections
- 1:00 Welcome Back
Bob Wessely, Water Assembly President

Keynote Address

- 1:05 A Shakeup Is Needed in the Water Management World!
Norm Gaume, Former Director of the NM ISC

Exploring New Creative Actions to Avoid Catastrophe

1:20-1:50 Panel

- NMAA's *El Plan del Movimiento de las Acequias* – Santiago Maestas
- *Stewardship - A Passion of the Future* – Lynn Montgomery
- *A Collaborative Process to Support Decision-making through Reclamation's Basin Study Program* – Dagmar Llewelyn
- Climate Adaptation Ideas – Kevin Bean
- Principles to consider - from Fred Phillips, Em Hall and Frank Titus

- 1:50 Facilitated Discussion of Strategies to Move Forward
Elaine Hebard, Water Assembly Vice President

Wrap Up

- 2:50 Closing Words, What Next?
John Fleck, UNM Water Resources Program Director
- 3:00 Adjourn