

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT #2

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission - Regional Water Planning Program

Section 8 - Implementation of Strategies to Meet Future Water Demand

November 2015



Over the coming months your water planning region will be finalizing your regional water plan update, including *Section 8, Implementation of Strategies to Meet Future Water Demand*. Section 8, together with *Section 2, Public Involvement in the Planning Process*, are to be prepared by the regions with assistance from the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC). Special attention to *Section 8* is critical as it will help guide future implementation of local and statewide water management efforts.

Background

Earlier this year all 16 water planning regions worked with the ISC to compile lists of projects, programs and policies relevant to water management within each region. These lists, currently in spreadsheet format, were intended to capture everything from initiatives currently underway to ideas still in conceptual development. Sources for this information included organizations and individuals participating in regional water planning, New Mexico's Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Plans (ICIPs), capital outlay requests or approvals, and applications to the New Mexico Water Trust Board.

Purpose

Section 8 serves multiple purposes. For the regions it creates an opportunity to review and evaluate a wide range of management options and to identify areas of collective interest and momentum towards implementation. For the state it allows for an assessment of regional goals and interests, overall funding needs, and the identification of water management concerns that are consistent statewide.

Access to Funding

- Water Trust Board (WTB) – Inclusion of a project within a regional water plan update is recommended as it allows for additional points in the WTB's application evaluation process. However, inclusion of a project does not guarantee funding, and the WTB may fund projects not included in plan updates.
- Other Sources – Generally speaking, inclusion of a project or program within a regional water plan update may support access to funding sources other than the WTB.

State Water Plan – In 2017 the State Water Plan will be updated incorporating ISC-accepted regional water plan updates to be completed in 2016. Policies, programs and projects highlighted by numerous water planning regions will help guide drafting of the updated State Water Plan. During the ISC-facilitated meetings in the winter and spring of 2016, you will be asked to further identify areas of regional collaboration and to make recommendations for policies and programs to inform the State Water Plan.

Next Steps

Section 8 must reflect regional interests. To this end, the ISC requests that each region work toward both finalizing your spreadsheet list, and providing input for the narrative discussion as outlined below.

Finalizing Spreadsheets – Regional steering committees are asked to work with the ISC to ensure:

- Completeness – Does the list include all projects, programs and policies that are needed? For each project, program or policy, is the information provided accurate and complete? (If the organization you represent has included a project, program or policy, please ensure all necessary information is included.)
- Relevancy – Are any projects included that should not be? Are any projects, programs, and policies controversial? If so, please include an explanation of the reasons both for and against. Does the steering committee want to comment regarding relevancy on any of the items included?

Ranking of projects, programs and policies included in the spreadsheets remains optional for each region.

Report Narrative – ISC facilitators working with each region will draft a narrative discussion, based on regional input, to include:

- Commentary on Previously Proposed Alternatives – This includes a general assessment of outcomes based on the alternatives, or management strategies, proposed in your region’s previously accepted plan.
- Projects of Greatest Interest – Identification of projects for which there is regional interest and momentum to work collaboratively towards implementation. This could include projects the steering committee views as most important to their region or simply project areas where short-term implementation is most feasible.
- Policies and Programs of Greatest Interest – Regional recommendations in terms of priority policies and programs will be taken into consideration in drafting of the updated State Water Plan.

Examples and approach for identifying projects, programs and policies

Projects:

Water system infrastructure
Wastewater system infrastructure
Watershed restoration
Water reuse
Water conservation
Data collection (monitoring/characterization/studies)
Planning (preliminary engineering report, master planning, 40-year plan, other)
Water rights (protection, acquisition, transfer)
Water quality (protection, restoration)
And others as needed

Programs:

Data collection, conservation, planning, *and others as needed*

Policies:

Identify general policy area (water rights, quality, conservation, other)
Identify whether it is federal, state, or local
Identify implementation process (statutory or regulatory change, guidance, or other)
Provide a detailed description. This is the general category to be used to capture suggested initiatives that are not easily defined as a project or a program. For example, developing a process to work on a specific conflict in the region could belong here.

Thank you for your important work supporting state and regional water planning.