

EL AVISO

FEBRUARY 2003

Water and its Uses

As we all know, so far this year has been even drier than last year, reminding us that precipitation and everything else about water in New Mexico is always unpredictable.

The Rio Chama Acequias Association is collaborating with Rio Arriba County to develop a Regional Water Plan for the Rio Chama and its tributaries. Information about the Lower Chama, Ojo Caliente and El Rito watersheds (including the Rio Tusas and Rio Vallecitos) are included in the fact-finding mission.

Protecting farmland and planning infrastructure is identified as priorities for the County's future. With a goal toward better understanding how much water we have and how water affects our lives, the first phase of the process has developed a "30-year vision of land use and development plan". Scenarios show Rio Arriba County could lose private land and water rights without planning. Hopefully residents will be able to participate more effectively in both regional water planning and countywide general planning.

The ultimate source of all the water supply we have is precipitation. Even the deepest ground water is just rain or snowmelt stored underground. About 85% of the precipitation we get either evaporates or is used by vegetation, 12% runs off in streams and 3% or less recharges ground water supplies.

Most of what is known about water in the Rio Chama is actually based on estimates, not direct measurements. Based on estimates of things we want to know: streamflow, water use, return flows, etc., these assumptions and calculations may not be completely accurate, but are the best information available. However, in the Rio Ojo Caliente and El Rito area a much better idea of

runoff exists than in most Chama tributaries, because there has been a stream gage near La Madera since 1932 and there was one near El Rito from 1931 to 1950.

Domestic and other water uses make up only 1% of the El Rito and Ojo Caliente total water use and 8% of the Lower Chama uses. In our area surface and ground water are closely connected. Most domestic water does come from a well or other underground source, but most aquifers in the Ojo Caliente and El Rito watersheds are shallow and closely connected to surface water. In other words, the aquifers do not store very much water themselves, and water pumped from a well is usually recharged fairly quickly from stream flow. This means that substantial pumping of wells will soon diminish the flow in streams.

Almost all the water used in the Ojo Caliente and El Rito areas is for irrigation and since irrigation water use isn't actually measured, it has to be estimated from acreage and crop water needs. About 3/4th of the water diverted into acequias eventually returns to streams or ground water, according to State Engineer estimates. This means we have to divert about four times as much water as the crops actually need, to be sure of getting enough water into the fields.

A major ground water problem is septic tank effluent. In some parts of the Chama valley, septic tanks have contaminated water supply and clean water needs to be brought in, when found, from elsewhere. The other alternative is to provide better wastewater treatment so that drinking water aquifers are protected from contamination in the first place.

What about the future? Looking only at total quantities of water, there should be more than enough water for future population growth. However, it's not quit so simple. Most of our available water supplies are surface water ⇒

LAS CLINICAS DEL NORTE: A Community Health Center, Established in 1972

Serving the communities of Abiquiu, Ancones, Barranco, Cañon, Carson, Chili, Cañones, Cañon Plaza, Duranes, El Llanito, El Pueblo, El Rito, Gallegos, Gavilan, Ghost Ranch, La Cueva, La Madera, La Mesa, La Zorro, Las Casitas, Las Tablas, Los Pinos, Medanales, No Agua, Ojo Caliente, Olguin, Petaca, Placitas, Plaza Blanca, Rio Chama, San Miguel, Servilleta, Servilleta Plaza, Silvestres, Tierra Azul, Tres Orejas, Tres Piedras, Tusas and Vallecitos and Youngsville

⇒ – but most of our expanding water needs are for drinking water, and surface water has to be treated, pumped, stored, and piped to where it's needed. Reliable ground water supplies may not be located where the needs are, and ground water quality is a real problem in some areas. Collecting information about how much water is available, what we use it for and understanding how much we'll need for the future is essential.

We are fortunate to have significant surface water irrigation supplies, even though they are not always enough. To preserve this water supply, we must make sure it is put to use. We need to revitalize agriculture so that the water in the acequias not only keeps the fields green, it helps our farmers and communities support themselves. Water is a crucial thread, but not the only thread, in the tapestry of life in Rio Arriba that we seek to preserve, enhance and hand on to our children.

Watershed district meetings are occurring on a regular basis. On January 28 there was a workshop at Onate Center north of Espanola to begin developing a Comprehensive Watershed Plan for the future. This will be an on-going task, so look for scheduled meetings in the El Aviso calendar and other newspapers.

HOW Antibiotics Can Harm You

We discussed antibiotics last year and feel that a review plus some new information is appropriate. Misuse of antibiotics has made many illnesses difficult to treat and sometimes incurable. Sometimes these drugs can help, but when they can't, using them incorrectly has led to many needless illnesses and deaths.

Antibiotics: Useful Only Against Bacteria:

Antibiotics attack bacteria, and ONLY bacteria. The drug may help when bacteria are involved. Examples include strep throat, bacterial pneumonia, food poisoning, sinus infections, and many sexually transmitted diseases. But many common illnesses, such as colds and flues, are related to viruses. Then, antibiotics won't work, but may cause more illness in yourself and others.

Bacteria Help Us Live (But Can Hurt Us):

Antibiotics attack bacteria, which are living things too small to see. We could not live without good bacteria, but they can also cause disease. Healthy humans have TRILLIONS of bacteria in and on our bodies. To simplify, think of them as "friendly", "unfriendly," or

"neutral." The friendly bacteria help us in many ways, like digesting food and slowing the growth of the unfriendlies.

New Information On Overuse Of Antibiotics:

Antibacterial soaps may be no more effective against germs than common soap, and could contribute to the threat posed by drug-resistant bacterial strains, according to a statement by the American Medical Association (AMA). "There's no evidence that they do any good and there's reason to suspect that they could contribute to a problem" by helping to create antibiotic-resistant bacteria, said Myron Genel, chairman of the AMA's Council on Scientific Affairs and a Yale University pediatrician. He said use of the products may contribute to the well-recognized problem created by excessive use of antibiotics that has led to mutated bacterial strains that are resistant to drugs.

The poultry industry has quietly begun to bow to the demands of public health and consumer groups by greatly reducing the antibiotics that are fed to healthy chickens. Long a mainstay of poultry farming, antibiotics have been justified as a means of preventing infection in chickens as well as enhancing growth. Opponents have bitterly criticized the industry for a strategy that they say contributes to a much larger public health problem: the growing resistance to antibiotics of disease-causing bacteria in humans.

Antibiotic Misuse = More Illness

Anytime an antibiotic is used, some bacteria are killed, and others are left living. The best situation for a sick person is that the drug only kills the specific type of bacteria making them ill, and kills all of them. But drugs are hard to make that specific, and are often misused. So what can easily happen is that some bacteria *are* left living. These may be the ones making a person sick. Or they may be others that were affected by the antibiotic. But these survivors get stronger, and they already have or will develop ways to stop the antibiotic from working. In 24 hours, one of them can grow to become MILLIONS. Now these stronger, drug-resistant bacteria may cause problems either for the sick person, or for other people who are weak or ill. Here are some common ways people can actually get sicker from taking antibiotics:

- Not taking the required amount: If you stop taking the antibiotic before your health care provider recommends, some of the unwanted bacteria will still be alive. As explained above, these will be the stronger bacteria. They may make you sick again later, and will be resistant to the antibiotic ⇒

⇒ you first took. Or you may pass these stronger bugs on to someone who is weaker, who are at risk for becoming ill.

- **Using a sledgehammer when a tap will do:** The more specific the antibiotic is, the less effect it will have on other friendly or neutral bacteria. When “broad-spectrum” drugs are used, they affect all types of bacteria, with different levels of success. This increases the chance that drug-resistance will develop among some of them that aren’t causing problems now, but will later, perhaps in an older member of your family, or someone receiving cancer treatment. What may be a neutral bug for you may be dangerous to someone else whose immune system is not as strong.
- **Taking an antibiotic when bacteria aren’t making you sick:** The drug won’t help, but it may hurt. Friendly bacteria are usually killed along with the unwanted. Maybe this will only lead to an upset stomach. Or other critters will grow quickly because the “friendly” bacteria used to stop them – and now another illness comes up, maybe something far worse than the original problem. And there’s still the social problem of having unnecessarily attacked some bacteria that weren’t causing you illness, and killing off all but the most drug-resistant that may cause harm later.

Many illnesses that used to be easily treatable are now not so easy. Varieties of pneumonia, tuberculosis, gonorrhea, and malaria are just a few of the many diseases that may respond to only a couple or perhaps NO antibiotics at all. EXPERTS AGREE THIS IS LARGELY DUE TO ANTIBIOTIC MISUSE.

Majority of Antibiotics Used Incorrectly

If you are a parent of a sick child, you want your child to get well as quickly as possible. But of 100 children with a fever, only 10 will have a bacterial infection (the other 90 are viral). Since most of the antibiotic prescriptions are for children under 6, it is no surprise that this age group is the one most likely to be infected by highly resistant bacteria.

Some experts estimate that 80% of respiratory infections are treated with unnecessary drugs. Meanwhile, pneumonias, which killed 3.5 million people worldwide in 1998, are becoming harder to treat. Antibiotics are also used to fatten animals and to spray fruit trees. 40% of all U.S. antibiotics go to animals, the majority to promote growth. (Europe has banned the animal use of antibiotics that are used to treat people). And last June, the AMA asked for increased government regulation of anti-bacterial soaps, lotions, and other products. The AMA stated

there is no info showing these products have infection-fighting benefit, but they may help increase the amount of drug-resistant bacteria.

How to Reduce Your Risk of Drug-Resistant Infection

See the Quick Tips column below for how to reduce your risks. In general, you want to be able to have your body fight off most infections. To do that, you have to become and stay fit. Eat and sleep well, be active at things you enjoy, quit smoking, limit alcohol drinking, and get help as needed to take action to live a happier, healthier life. There may be a time an antibiotic will be necessary to shorten a serious illness or save your life. By keeping yourself fit and only using antibiotics correctly, you will help yourself and others.

Quick Tips

Reduce Your Chances of Getting A Drug-Resistant Infection

No one wants to be sick any longer than they have to be. But as this month’s main health article points out, antibiotics are too often misused. Then, the drug doesn’t help, and all that is left is to harm with side effects, or help create drug-resistant bacteria that will hurt you or others in the future. Below are some tips to help you reduce your chance of getting a drug-resistant infection.

- **Don’t Demand An Antibiotic:** if your health care provider has determined that one can’t help your problem, ask questions and learn why. Remember: viruses cause many illnesses. Antibiotics only attack bacteria. Even if your infection is caused by bacteria, you and your provider may decide that it is not serious enough to treat with drugs. If you are otherwise healthy, letting it run its course may not take any longer. Your body will be stronger for it, and you won’t have added to the chance of creating drug-resistant bacteria.
- **If You Get An Antibiotic, Follow All Directions:** Skipping doses can lead to longer illnesses, and allow drug resistant bacteria to grow. (Remember: In 24 hours, a few go to millions). Take the drug for the number of days you are told, *even if you feel better*. If you stop taking the antibiotic, you will allow the strongest bacteria to stay alive and grow to millions again.
- **Don’t Take Old Prescriptions:** See your health care provider and find out if an antibiotic is needed. If you have “leftover” medication or have borrowed some from another person, it may attack the wrong bacteria. Or you may have a virus. And old medicines can be less effective, and in some cases, cause sickness themselves. None of these are good. ⇒

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- **Wash Your Hands:** This is the single most important thing you can do to prevent infection. Make sure that toys and equipment and the hands that use them are washed and clean. Soap is important, but friction removes most of the bacteria – rubbing all parts of the hands well.
- **Get and Stay Healthy:** physical activity, eating and sleeping well, coping with stresses in healthy ways – these all make your immune system stronger so you can fight off infections.
- **Consider Pneumonia Vaccination:** if you are over 64 or have a chronic illness, pneumonia vaccinations are recommended. That way, you decrease your chances of getting sick or even needing to take an antibiotic.

Quit Smoking for LentPrepare Yourself for Easter

Quit Smoking Groups at the Ojo Caliente & El Rito Clinics

Learn how to quit smoking. Even though it may be difficult to do, you can quit smoking with assistance from Las Clinicas staff and other people.

- Two groups will be starting the first week of March, one in Ojo Caliente and the other in El Rito. The group in Ojo Caliente will be a bilingual group for both Spanish and English speaking patients and the El Rito group will be in English only. Family members or a helpful friend are also welcome.
- 2-weeks of *FREE* Nicotine Patches are available for people attending the groups.

Ask your doctor or provider for more information or call Mary Ann at the El Rito Clinic at 581-4728 ext. 263. Las Clinicas del Norte's smoking cessation programs are made possible with a grant from the New Mexico Department of Health.

Announcements & News Briefs

Welcome – Denise Gallegos is back at

LCDN! She is our new administrative assistant in El Rito. Denise worked as a cashier receptionist from 1994 to 1999. Welcome back Denise.

Job Opening: The nursing department is still looking for a nurse (LPN or Medical Assistant). Call Thelma Chavez or Julie Hill-Clapp at 581-4728.

Dental Department – Effective April 1st changes will be made in the sliding fee charges in restoration and extractions. Contact the dental clinic for more information, 581-4728.

⊗ Community Events ⊗

Contact Person, Joan Tollefson, Editor, 776-8778 or 581-4728

Las Clinicas 24-hour Emergency Number – 1-888-678-6160
El Rito

Las Clinicas del Norte Board Meeting – every 3rd Monday, 7 pm, El Rito clinic Community Room

El Rito Library – Tues, Wed, Thurs, 11 am – 6 pm, and Sat, 11 am – 3 pm.

El Rito Library Board Mtgs. – every 1st Wed, 6 pm at Library
Tutoring – El Rito Save the Children Ctr, call for info. 581-4516

AA Meetings El Rito – Tues, & Thurs, 7m – 8pm, at Catholic Church Parish Hall, open discussion. Contact Linda, 747-8043

El Rito Fire Dept. Mtgs. – every 2nd Wednesday, 7 pm, at the El Rito Fire Station, open to the public

Recycling El Rito – every 4th Saturday, 9 am – 2 pm, behind the Martins Store Gas Station

Abiquiu

Recycling Abiquiu – 4th Sunday every month, 9 am-2 pm, Abiquiu Las Clinicas clinic parking lot

Al-Anon Meetings Abiquiu – Monday, 5 pm, call for location., contact numbers, 581-4471 or 685-4503

Abiquiu Library – Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, 2 pm – 6 pm, and Sunday, 9 am – 12 noon, on the Plaza

Abiquiu Fire Dept. Mtg. – every 2nd Thursday, 7 pm at Abiquiu Fire Dept.

Ojo Caliente

Diabetic Mgt. Class – Wed, Feb. 19, 12:00 to 1:30 pm, *Glucose Monitoring/Setting Goals*, Ojo Caliente Clinic Conference Rm.

Ojo Caliente Fire Dept. Mtg. – every 1st Wednesday, 7 pm, Ojo Caliente Fire Dept.

Medanales

Medanales, Rio Chama, Tierra Azul Community Mtg. – every 1st Monday, 7 pm, Medanales Comm. Ctr., ph.#, 685-9416

Northern New Mexico Community College El Rito Campus

We would like to welcome back our students.

Two new board of regents for Northern have been appointed by Governor Richardson and they are: **Mr. Michael Branch** and **Mr. Dennis Salazar**. Welcome, gentlemen, from staff and faculty.

February 15th at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Arroyo Seco our Student Senate will be having a Valentine's Day Dance for all Northern students, staff and faculty at no charge. Times are from 8:00-1:00 PM. (Live Band and some finger foods will be available).

We are now planning, along with El Sueno Ranch from Abiquiu, to have a program for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students called *Kid's, Kows and More*. That will take place on **March 20th** at the El Rito Campus.

Our new program called *Camp* is at the El Rito campus. For more information call 581-4138.

We all hope for some kind of moisture. For more information on classes, call Dorothy Duran at 581-4115 or Donald Martinez at 581-4120.

Abiquiu Public Library

Thank You!

We here at the Abiquiu Public Library would like to express our heart-felt thank you to everyone that gave donations to support our library! We have received donations from individuals and from large and small companies. Some donations are small and some are large but all help in the biggest way. By receiving your donations our library can continue to provide information and service to all patrons. Our library is non-profit, so the donations, grants and fund raisers is the only way our library can continue to provide programs such as the After School Tutoring Program, the Head start (story time) Program, we can continue to provide computer services free to all, this also includes free internet access. Our library can provide so much more and with your help we can work for you and your family.

After School Tutoring Program

Need a job. Are you between the ages of 14 and 18, and currently in school? Come in and talk to us. We are now taking applications for Teen Tutors, to work as mentors with elementary age kids. The tutoring program has been helping the children from the Abiquiu Elementary since October, and the progress continues until May. Higher-grade kids with a grade point average of 2.5 are tutoring the children, in homework, and helping them improve in school 3 or more hours a week. We are willing to work with you if you have any school activities. If you are interested please contact Loretta at the library during business hours, at (505) 685-4884. If you would like to enroll your elementary age student to be tutored, come in or call. Remember now is the time to work with your child to improve their final grade.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers that have worked with our library. Our volunteers have done a great job in help our staff with many duties. We are always in need of more help and if you feel that you can come in and help at any time, please contact the library staff.

Weeding old books

The library is currently weeding through the non-fiction in hopes that we can improve the circulation of those items. We would like to replace them with new and updated books. If you think that you may have some books of non-fiction that are less than 5 years old (publication date) Please contact the library. We are now working on the art and biography sections and will be working with the health and gardening sections next. If you have any request on something that you would like to see of these items please let us know.

EL RITO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Your Local Resource for Books-Videos-Computers-Books on Tape- Literacy for all ages

Our Winter Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 11-6, and Saturday - 11-3

The El Rito Library now has a 15-year lease with the Mesa Vista Consolidated School. We will continue to focus on being the best "Little Library" in Northern New Mexico. We offer a variety of services: Inter-library loans, computer literacy training, free internet service, photocopying for only 10 cents a copy, plenty of movie videos, and a tremendous selection of books. Remember, this is your library, come by and use it.

Our former library director, **Ginger Legato**, may have moved to New York but she hasn't forgotten about the library. Every couple of months she sends us one or two boxes of books and audios published by Penguin Books. Opening these boxes is like having Christmas several times a year. The latest arrived today and include several books on tape: *The Dark Tower IV* by Stephen King; *The Isle of Dogs* by Patricia Cornwell; and *Orchid Blues* by Stuart Woods. Among the books Ginger sent is *Beyond the Sky and the Earth: A Journey into Bhutan*. The Library is also ordering several new art books, videos and books on tape which should be here by the time you read this, including the videos *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Latcho Drom*, *West Side Story* and *A Hard Day's Night*. You may also want to have a look at some of the classic musicals we already have, like *Singin' in the Rain*, *Cabaret*, and *There's No Business Like Show Business*. Other newly arrived books on tape are *July, July* by Tim O'Brien and Alice McDemott's *Child of my Heart*.

On January 18, 2003 a wake service was held for Walter Pickette. There were about fifty people who attended and we were honored to have been able to host the wake here at the Library.

The Spanish Class has resumed and we have had two sessions. If you are still interested in attending class, we have plenty of room. Thank you **David Genth** for stepping up to the plate and volunteering to teach the class. The Spanish Class meets every Tuesday night starting at 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

REMINDER: If you would like to make a tax deductible donation, please drop off your donation at the library or mail it to: El Rito Library, P.O. Box 5, El Rito, NM 87530.