

RELATIONSHIP TO THE GROUND-WATER PROTECTION POLICY AND ACTION PLAN (GPPAP)

Bernalillo County and the CABQ adopted and implemented the GPPAP due to the importance of protecting the quality of water within Bernalillo County. The GPPAP combines strategic and participatory planning, monitoring activities, and recommendations for developing regulations. The mission of the GPPAP is to:

Ensure the quality of ground-water resources so that the public health, quality of life, and economic vitality of this and future generations are not diminished.

The goals of GPPAP are three-fold:

Protect the ground-water resources;

Find and clean up contaminated ground water; and

Promote the coordinated and prudent use of the ground-water resource throughout the region.

The GPPAP consists of: (1) general policy statements including Policies A through F, (2) protection measures aligned for each of the policy statements and (3) the action plan to implement the policy and protection measures. Of particular importance to the context of this report are Policies B, E, and F and the associated protection measures and action plan items.

Policy B: The City and County shall identify ground-water contamination and expedite corrective action. Implementation of this policy includes a call for monitoring groundwater quality associated with known or suspected sources of groundwater contamination, and also, prioritizing areas of known or potential septic-tank contamination and aggressively pursuing expansion of wastewater collection and treatment facilities. The action plan for water and wastewater management addresses continuing and expanding on-site liquid waste disposal monitoring. The GPPAP specifically calls for assessing groundwater degradation from existing on-site liquid waste disposal practices, particularly in the East Mountain Area (EMA), Sandia Heights, and North Albuquerque Acres (NAA). The action plan for threat control identifies a requirement to evaluate

suspected groundwater contamination areas, monitor groundwater quality and soil vapor at landfills and to determine best management practices and waste minimization techniques.

Thomson et al. (2000) selected the monitoring well locations in the East Mountains and Far Northeast Heights to monitor the potential impact of septic-tank use in area subdivisions. Under a separate program, the County constructed the well series along Rio Bravo Boulevard and Malpais Road to evaluate the potential effect of agricultural chemicals on the shallow groundwater of the South Valley and, if warranted, recommend best management practices for use of agricultural chemicals. Monitoring wells were installed on the far West Mesa near the CABQ soil amendment facility, at 9-Mile Hill, on Niese Road (nested piezometer), and at the South Broadway landfill to help address the potential impacts from nearby landfill facilities.

Policy E: The City and County shall undertake comprehensive water-resource management planning. The implementation of GPPAP calls for continuing and expanding regional groundwater monitoring, and promoting coordinated water-resources management and identifies certain activities as critical to groundwater protection. These activities include developing and implementing a regional groundwater monitoring program and developing the computer models needed to assess how local pollution events threaten the regional water supply.

This report is intended as an overview of the existing regional monitoring program for use by the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners, the Groundwater Protection Advisory Board (GPAB was created as part of the GPPAP implementation), and other interested parties. This report provides data derived from the existing groundwater network and discusses the data within the context of other regional monitoring activities. The report addresses issues of natural variability in the regional aquifers, and by the use of data from strategically located monitoring wells, aids in assessing where groundwater quality is being affected. The report also evaluates existing trends in regional water levels, water-quality, and water use and discusses those trends within the context of studies performed by other entities and agencies addressing water-management issues. Based on this information, the report provides findings and recommendations for changes and expansion in the monitoring program.

Policy F: The City and County shall encourage, facilitate, and acknowledge public participation. Implementation of this policy specifically calls for informing the public of existing and potential ground-water problems. The Commissioners, members of GPAB, and other County staff can use it as a resource for public information to assist in identifying areas of on-going water level decline and on-going water quality problems. Recommendations include a broader dissemination of water level monitoring data via the Water Resources web page.