

**New Mexico State
University**

Cooperative Extension Service
P.O. Box 30003 MSC 3AE
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Phone 505/646-1131
Fax 505/646-8085
Email crunyan@nmsu.edu

Protejer El Rio – End of Project Report

PI: Craig Runyan, NMSU Extension Water Quality Program Coordinator

A Cooperative Extension Project to Protect the
Rio Grande from Household Hazardous
Wastes

Funded by USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and
Extension Service Integrated Water Quality Program (Section 406)
Contract # 00-51130-9750

PI and Project Coordinator

Craig Runyan, Extension Water Quality Program Coordinator

Responsible for development of program printed and Internet materials. Provided project orientation for county faculty. Coordinated development of billboard graphics and display locations. Responsible for fiscal and personnel management. Also arranged in-school program scheduling and delivery. Also housed toll free public access line for public inquiries.

Cooperating County Extension Agents

<u>Tony Valdez</u> ,	Rio Arriba Extension Agent
<u>Rey Torres</u> ,	Taos County Extension Agent
<u>Patrick Torres</u> ,	Santa Fe County Extension Agent
<u>Rudy Benividez</u> ,	Sandoval County Extension Agent
<u>Patricia Aaron</u> ,	Bernalillo County Extension Agent
<u>Frank Holquin</u> ,	Valencia County Extension Agent
<u>Jack Valentine</u> ,	Socorro County Extension Agent
<u>Albert Lyon</u> ,	Sierra County Extension Agent

County Agents provided local project support by coordinating program delivery with city/county webmasters, merchants, public school teachers, county librarians, Master Gardeners, and participating civic organizations. Agents identified and arranged distribution points for project materials. Agents also advised the project coordinator of schools and teachers that desired classroom pollution prevention programs.

Support Staff

Clay Sewell, Program Assistant, Water Quality

One program assistant provided logistical support throughout the project. Responsibilities included collection of distribution quantities to counties, securing county government logos for customizing printed materials, validating contact information, packaging and delivery of project materials to participating counties, and communication with city/county officials requiring information about their role locally.

Jenny Russell, Student Employee, NMSU Agriculture and Home Economics

One student employee assisted with pre-press steps, graphics selection, publication appearance, editing, and billboard contract negotiations.

DON'T DUMP IT!

Household Hazardous Waste is NOT Disposable!
Protect the Río Grande Quiz

'Don't Dump It!' was the theme of this Extension Service public awareness mass media campaign to reduce the impact of household hazardous waste

(HHW) to the Rio Grande. The project has had a positive impact on the awareness of the public to practice safe HHW management practices. Quantitative impacts to water quality of the Rio Grande are being ascertained along with TMDL development and routine testing.

Project Accomplishments

Homeowners Risk Assessments – A homeowners household hazardous waste risk assessment, loosely modeled after national Home*A*Syst materials, was developed. Entitled '*How's Your ESP? – Test Your Knowledge of Environmental Stewardship and Preservation*', the assessment ranks the users score and provides alternative practices to improve HHW management. The assessment was written to be comprehended by school age children while addressing important potentially hazardous practices. Uses for the assessment include supporting school curriculum and Master Gardener training. Four thousand five hundred of the assessments have been distributed through schools, public libraries, civic groups, Master Gardeners, etc. An additional 1500 are available for future requests.

Household Hazardous Waste Tri-fold Brochure – An informational brochure was developed with a question/answer type format. An explanation of the risk that HHW poses is presented in the brochure. Local contact information is provided (customized for each county) along with a toll free number and Internet address for additional information. The primary point of distribution for the brochures has been through merchants at the point of sales for lawn and garden and other household chemicals. County Extension Agents coordinated with local businesses to have counter employees include a brochure with the sale of certain products. Over 28,000 brochures have been distributed throughout the Rio Grande corridor.

Municipal Utility Billing Inserts – Quarter page inserts to utility bills have been sent to over 189,000 municipal utility customers. The inserts display one of four messages dealing with HHW management. The messages provide practical homeowner tips on storage, handling, purchasing, recycling, and disposal of HHW. Local contact information, a toll free number, and website URL is on each of the inserts. Enthusiastic cooperation was received from city/municipality officials to include the insert in a monthly utility billing.

Teacher Notebooks – A teacher resource notebook was compiled for distribution to public school teachers expressing a commitment to pollution prevention education. The folders were printed with a clean water artwork. Contents of the notebooks included printed materials on pollution prevention, the ESP booklet, bumper stickers, and other promotional materials. Several of the folders were also placed with local Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors for distribution to educators through other channels. One hundred folders were assembled and distributed.

Internet Protejer El Rio Homepage – An Internet based web site was developed that displays HHW management practices and resources for additional information. The web pages include a homepage with general information on protecting the river, an interactive quiz designed for use in classroom activities, contact information for county Extension offices, tips on how individuals can help keep the river clean, and links to related resources. The website remains active at: <http://www.protecttheriver.org>.



'Don't Dump It' Bumper Stickers – Vehicle bumper stickers displaying the 'Don't Dump It' and project logos have been distributed to city and county agencies for display on government vehicles. Distribution of the stickers also included SWCD's, teachers, and the general public. Approximately 2000 of the bumper stickers were distributed.

Cable Television Public Service Announcements – Three of New Mexico's cable television service companies that reach 75% of the state's viewing audience broadcast pollution prevention public service announcements. Each company broadcast the PSA's for thirty days. The announcements were displayed throughout the programming day. The messages of the PSA's were similar to those used for the utility bill inserts and provide tips on HHW management. The messages were broadcast an estimated 2000 times during the 30-day period.

'Don't Dump It' Highway Billboard Advertising – Four highway billboards were leased for 120 days each. The billboards displayed the 'Don't Dump It' message with local and toll free contact information (see cover). The boards were located adjacent to Interstate 25, which runs through the Rio Grande valleys from Las Cruces to Santa Fe. Coverage was maximized for both north and southbound traffic. An estimated 400,000 travelers have viewed the signs. The signs will stay in place beyond the contract agreement, until another lease displaces them.

Radio Programs on HHW – Two radio programs were taped and distributed to radio stations statewide. The content of the interview format programs focused on proper HHW disposal. Local government sponsored hazardous waste collection information was also discussed. Approximately 30 radio stations broadcast the programs. An estimated 125,000 listeners heard the programs.

Part 3 Project Impacts

Based on the scope of the project and the numbers of people reached, it can be assumed that an increased awareness of HHW management was accomplished by a reasonable percentage of participants. The numbers of people reached are reflected by the following:

- Over 28,000 informational brochures were distributed by merchants at point of sales for lawn/garden and other household chemicals.
- Nearly 190,000 inserts with tips on proper HHW use and disposal were included in city/county utility billing.
- Over 350 visitors to the www.protecttheriver.org website were recorded in a nine month period
- An estimated 400,000 travelers on Interstate 25 viewed the project 'Don't Dump It' billboards.
- 125,000 radio listeners received informational radio programs on HHW management
- Thousands of cable television viewers were exposed multiple times to informational tips on HHW use/disposal.
- 750 elementary school children participated in classroom programs explaining the hydrologic cycle, pollution prevention, and HHW use.
- Risk assessment worksheets were distributed to over 4000 people for use in formal and informal educational settings.

Wastewater bio-monitoring results are not available at the time of this report. Follow-up contact with targeted city wastewater facility managers is pending. Requests will be made of those managers to provide bio-monitoring test results for a 12 month period of time immediately prior to and several months following the main project delivery period.

Also, it is too early to ascertain the level of commitment by city/county agencies to sustain some level of HHW awareness program. Additional follow up survey will be required to obtain such information.

The project has achieved 90% of its objectives as described in the project plan of work. Reception by the public has been positive. Public officials have been supportive and complimentary of the efforts by Extension to initiate Protejer El Rio.

Materials

Office supplies, packaging for material distribution, computer supplies, etc accounted for \$2000 or less than 10% of the budget.

Publication/printing costs

The large bulk of printed materials for this project amounted to about 31% of the budget, or \$6,500.

All Other Direct Costs

Web development, editing, billboard lease, and delivery van rental totaled \$9000 expenditure or 84% of the total budget

Indirect Costs

Overhead paid by this project amounted to 20% of the total budget or \$2500.