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Funding Approved to Address *E. coli* Contamination in Rio Fernando de Taos
Amigos Bravos to Work with Stakeholders to Identify Pollution Sources and Solutions

Amigos Bravos, *Because Water Matters* was awarded \$113,747.00 Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant funds by the New Mexico Environment Department, to create a Watershed Based Plan to address *E. coli* contamination in the Rio Fernando de Taos. This work will involve an intense sampling effort to pinpoint locations and sources of *E. coli* pollution.

The Watershed Based Plan, scheduled to be completed by April 1, 2019, will involve working with local stakeholders, property owners, and residents to identify and prioritize on-the-ground projects to reduce the *E. coli* impairment.

“We are thrilled to begin this collaborative effort and bring action to the known *E. coli* pollution which degrades a waterway that flows directly through the Taos community”, said Shannon Romeling, Projects and Foundations Coordinator for Amigos Bravos.

“This project will expand the current water sampling efforts that Water-Sentinels-Rios de Taos and Amigos Bravos conduct each year in Taos County, and allow us to test more of our samples for *E. coli*, leading to a better understanding of the problem and how to address it”, said Eric Patterson, Lead coordinator for Water Sentinels, a key partner in the project. “We are also very interested to determine why *E. coli* levels are so consistently high in the Rio Fernando as it flows through Fred Baca Park,” Eric continued.

Amigos Bravos and watershed stakeholders will create a Watershed Based Plan for the Río Fernando de Taos that includes the nine components outlined in the EPA’s Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidance in order to create a comprehensive Watershed Based Plan. The nine items include:

1. Identification of causes and sources of pollution that need to be controlled
2. Estimates of load reductions that could be achieved with new management measures
3. Descriptions of management measures to achieve goals

4. An implementation schedule
5. Interim milestones to track implementation of management measures
6. Criteria to measure progress toward meeting watershed goals
7. A monitoring plan to measure progress
8. An information/education component
9. Identification of technical and financial assistance (cost estimates and relevant programs) needed to implement the plan

Stakeholder meetings will be held 3 times a year and be open to the public. In addition to conducting watershed meetings, Amigos Bravos will individually reach out to many stakeholders including, but not limited to, the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District, Taos Valley Acequia Association, Rio Fernando Acequia Associations, Carson National Forest, recreational users and organizations, the two USFS grazing permittees in the project area, NM Department of Transportation, Town of Taos, homeowners and homeowner associations in the project area – especially those that utilize on-site waste treatment, the Northern New Mexico Stockman’s Association, the Range Improvement Task Force, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and Taos County.

Amigos Bravos is seeking volunteers to assist in our monthly sampling efforts, which will continue for the next 2 years. Please contact Shannon Romeling in the Amigos Bravos office at 575-758-3874 to become involved.

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Amigos Bravos is a statewide water advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the waters of New Mexico. www.amigosbravos.org