



March 18, 2021

New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission
1190 Saint Francis Drive
Suite South 2102
Santa Fe, New Mexico. 87505

Dear Commission Members:

New Mexico Trout enthusiastically supports the proposal by the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to designate parts of the Rio San Antonio, the Rio Jemez and the Rio Guadalupe as Outstanding National Resource Waters.

New Mexico Trout is a three hundred fifty-member-strong, 501(c) 3, local, all-volunteer organization dedicated to preserving and improving trout habitat and trout fishing in the state of New Mexico. These three streams are very familiar to us and we care very deeply about them. Our members fish them regularly. We volunteer on conservation projects on these streams in support of the US Forest Service, the Valles Caldera National Preserve, and the NM Department of Game and Fish. We have provided monetary support for equipment and supplies to the Forest Service and to area grazing permittees for protecting and restoring these waters.

New Mexico Trout considers the Rio Guadalupe to be its home waters. In fly fishing parlance this signifies the stream that the club knows best, has special affection for, and feels most protective of its health. For more than twenty-five years New Mexico Trout has done many volunteer projects with the Jemez District on the Guadalupe. Each year the Club conducts a trash pickup along FR 376 from the Gilman Tunnels to Porter's Landing. We collect and haul away many pickup loads of trash from the corridor that get tossed on it over a typical season. We built the original buck and pole barriers and the more recent bollard barriers that block illegal vehicle access to the stream and that have substantially reduced a major source of pollution, erosion, and silt flowing to the stream. New Mexico Trout paid for and installed the interpretive panels along FR 376 that promote conservation values and explain the benefits of clean, free-flowing streams to the public.

ONRW status will provide an extra level of protection to these Jemez streams that are so important to us. New activities that degrade water quality will be prohibited. We have heard that a few individuals are opposed to ONRW status for these streams because they believe that it will restrict existing activities, particularly those where any of the streams might flow through private property. This is a complete misunderstanding of the meaning of ONRW. Reference to the statute and supporting documents shows that ONRW status protects all existing uses and rights, such as those of acequias, grazing, wood collecting, bird watching, hiking, and gathering of traditional plants and herbs. ONRW status does provide an extra level of protection against degradation of water quality by new activities. We welcome this new tool to prevent activities that threaten our streams and therefore help keep our public waters clean and pure for those who come after us.

In summary, we strongly urge the Commission to designate these segments of the Rio San Antonio, the Rio Jemez, and the Rio Guadalupe as Outstanding National Resource Waters. NM Trout members believe that this extra protection will help preserve clean, cool mountain streams for future generations. This is important to us because we treasure the clear, cool water in Jemez Mountain streams that harbors the trout we pursue.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald Loehman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Ronald E. Loehman
Conservation Chairman
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