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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

San Juan County Executive Officer Signs Declaration Lifting Ban on Use of the Animas River

(Aztec, NM) – San Juan County Executive Officer, Dr. Kim Carpenter sent a signed declaration lifting the ban on use of the Animas River. “I am very pleased to sign this declaration, having full support from the Governor’s Long-Term Impact Review Team, the U.S. Environmental Agency, and Local Officials”. The ban will be officially lifted at 8:00pm tonight.

“Because the waters of the Animas and San Juan Rivers are now meeting all applicable water quality standards, the Environment Department, with the state’s multi-agency team, lifts the ban on water systems’ supply connections to the Animas and San Juan Rivers and on the public’s recreational use of the rivers in concurrence with local officials and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency,” said NM Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn.

Recreational users of the Animas and San Juan Rivers may notice some discoloration in the sediment along the river banks due to the spill. While there is continuing concern by the New Mexico officials for long-term river health and for that of aquatic life, the Environment and Health Departments do not anticipate adverse human health effects due to exposure to contaminated sediment during typical recreational activities.

Environment and Health recommend that the public may use the rivers, with the following prudent health practices, when contacting sediment and surface water as recommended by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease registry (ATSDR):

1. Don’t drink untreated water from the river.
2. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after contact with the sediment and surface water.
3. Avoid contact in areas where there is visible discoloration in sediment or river water.
4. Wash clothes after contact with sediment and surface water.

Catch and release fishing is recommended at this time.

Next Public Information Meeting will be Monday at 6pm at the Farmington Civic Center.

Specialists from the U.S. Environmental Agency, the NM Environmental Department, and NM State Engineers Office will be on hand to explain the results of testing and how decisions to lift the ban were made.

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As more information becomes available, updates will be sent out via media releases and on Facebook at the following

locations:

San Juan County Office of Emergency Management (www.sjcoem.com and on Facebook – San Juan County Office of Emergency Management)

San Juan County Government (www.sjcounty.net and facebook – San Juan County, New Mexico. Government)

City of Farmington (www.fmtn.org and www.facebook.com/cityoffarmingtonnm)

Farmington Fire Department (www.facebook.com/Farmingtonfire)

Farmington Police Department (www.facebook.com/farmingtonpolicedepartmentnm)

City of Aztec Municipal Government Offices (www.aztecnm.gov and facebook – City of Aztec Municipal Government Offices)

NMSU Cooperative Extension Service 505-334-9496

NMED web site www.nmedriverwatersafety.org

US EPA web site http://epaossc.org/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=11082