PERSONAL CONNECTIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS

J. Steven Glass, Board Chair
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Ciudad SWCD Constituencies

- Sandoval County: Open range, partially platted
- Village of Corrales: Semi-rural, non-ag
- City of Rio Rancho: Urbanized, non-ag
- West Mesa: Open range, grazing
- Los Ranchos de ABQ: Semi-urban, non-ag
- Bernalillo County: Semi-urban, agricultural
- To’ahjilee Navajo: Rural, undeveloped range
- South Valley: Semi-rural, agricultural
- Santa Fe County: Rural, non-agricultural
- North Valley: Semi-urban, semi-agricultural
- City of Albuquerque: Urban, non-agricultural
- Village of Tijeras: Semi-urban, non-agricultural
- East Mountains: Semi-rural, wildland interface
- Mesa del Sol: Open range, planned development

Ciudad SWCD encompasses nearly half of the population of the entire state of New Mexico
Key to Ciudad SWCD success

- Complex, diverse, competitive constituencies
- Personal connections are necessary to avoid getting lost in the shuffle
- Connections cultivated and maintained by Supervisors over years in public service
- Local entities important for personal connections
  - County governments
  - Municipal governments (cities, towns, villages)
  - Special districts (flood control, irrigation, water utility)
  - Intergovernmental collaborations: *Specific focus offers best opportunities for communication and new personal connections*
Intergovernmental Collaboration

- Middle Rio Grande MS4 Stakeholders
  - 19 cities, towns, villages, counties, flood control authorities and tribes
  - Primary partnering area: Federal pilot watershed-based stormwater permit issuance
  - *Ciudad SWCD provided grant-funded professional facilitation services in permit negotiations with USEPA*
Intergovernmental Collaboration

- **Middle Rio Grande Stormwater Quality Team**
  - 10 local stormwater agencies (cities, villages, counties, flood control authorities)
  - Primary partnering area: Federal stormwater permit public education compliance support
  - *Ciudad SWCD provides reportable public education and collaborative grant writing support*
  - *MRGSQT funds elementary school watershed health education program*
Intergovernmental Collaboration

- Mid Region Council of Governments
  - Water Resources Board: 19 regional agencies (cities, towns, villages, counties, irrigation district)
  - Primary partnering areas: Water quantity planning, watershed health
  - *Ciudad SWCD joined WRB in 2014; Two other SWCDs followed*
  - *SWCDs participated in updating the local Regional Water Plan*
  - *Ciudad SWCD representative elected WRB Chair in 2016*
Bernalillo County

● **Primary partnering areas**
  ◦ Upland forest health (WUI)
  ◦ Watershed restoration (WUI)
  ◦ Federal stormwater permit compliance support
  ◦ *Greenprint* low impact development master planning initiative

● **Unique funding relationship**
  ◦ 1% of 2014 Open Space mil levy earmarked for *SWCD* to support County cooperative programs
  ◦ County Commission side-stepped issue, but County staff implemented funding
Bernalillo County

- Personal contacts: A mixed bag
  - District 1 Commissioner (rural): Supports partnering and SWCD funding
  - District 2 Commissioner (rural): Supports partnering, advocated for tax set-aside to support SWCD
  - District 3 Commissioner (urban): Noncommittal
  - District 5 Commissioner (WUI): Supports partnering, but opposes SWCD funds from County
  - Water Resources Program Manager: Supports partnering for stormwater permit compliance
  - Open Space Program Manager: Supports partnering for watershed improvement, upland forest health, urban LID master planning
City/ County Water Authority

- Strong partnering potential
  - Initiated Rio Grande potable water treatment in 2008: Urban runoff impacts
  - Watershed health, water quality and quantity, local ag, public education support ABCWUA mission

- Personal contacts: A challenge
  - Executive Director: Opposes SWCD messaging about river contamination from urban runoff
  - Operations Manager: Cites stormwater as possible future water source, opposes messaging about future water shortages
  - Solids Management Superintendent: Supports markets for composted biosolids, but stymied by utility policies
Lessons Learned

- Personal connections with local officials are crucial to continued SWCD recognition and success
- Local officials respond best to SWCD collaborations that support their agency’s goals
- Personal connections must be cultivated and maintained through regular contacts over the long term
- Intergovernmental collaboratives can be good sources for developing personal connections
- Not all connections will be productive at first – persevere!