

Acequia receives funding for maintenance, piping

By Hannah Grover

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(Photo: Sen. Tom Udall's office)

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FARMINGTON — The Turley Manzanares Acequia in rural San Juan County will receive \$1.8 million for piping and maintenance, according to a press release from U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan Grisham.

The \$1.8 million is part of nearly \$10.5 million of funding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has allocated for water resources projects across New Mexico.

The press release from the four New Mexico Democrats states Udall worked as a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development to secure the highest level of funding ever for the corps of engineers.

“In New Mexico, we live by the saying ‘water is life’ because we know how vital this precious resource is to preserving our environment, economy, and culture,” said Udall in the press release. “I’m particularly proud that we secured funding to improve acequia irrigation systems, which are at the heart of our traditional communities, to ensure a secure water supply for farmers along the San Juan River. Strong federal investment in water infrastructure is essential to making sure communities are engaging in smart and efficient water management.

"This critical funding will help us maximize our water supply, improve flood control, and support local economies," Udall continued. "I'll continue to fight for resources to make sure that all New Mexico communities have access to key Corps programs that will help them engage in smart, collaborative water management so that our economy and environment can thrive."

Turley Manzanares Acequia Water Commission President Rob Baraker said the acequia is one of the oldest acequias on the San Juan River and has not had much work done on it since it was built. He said his water rights from the acequia date back to 1867.



Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (Photo: The Daily Times file photo)

“Water has sustained our way of life in New Mexico for generations, which is why it’s critically important that this plan provides funding for our acequias, supports collaboration with Tribes for water resource projects, and bolsters flood control work like the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration,” Luján said in the press release.

A few years ago, the acequia received funding that helped with 1,000 feet of piping, but the acequia commission would like to have more of it piped.

“We lose a lot of water through evaporation and seepage,” Baraker said. He said an estimated 25 percent of water is lost from the acequia due to those factors.

Piping would also help address other problems the acequia faces, including debris from runoff. Baraker said the acequia abuts New Mexico Highway 511, which goes to Navajo Lake. When

large storms bring a lot of rain to the area, the runoff from Archuleta Mesa goes into the acequia and a culvert under the highway drains into the ditch, he said.

Baraker said the acequia faces erosion problems as well.

“In some areas, we’re right on the San Juan River and we’ve got some shoring up to do or we’re going to lose our ditch into the river,” Baraker said.

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