

My View

## **Keeping our rivers, acequias and stormwater clean**

By Anna Hansen

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Anyone who knows me understands how passionate I am about the preservation of our environment and promoting sustainability. As a Santa Fe County commissioner and a member of the city's Santa Fe River Commission, I have made it one of my priorities to encourage sustainability for the benefit of the environment as well the quality of life for all residents. We must remember that conserving water is important, but we must also keep our water clean so it will remain available to us and future generations.

This is not a complete list of all that we can do to keep our water and environment clean and safe. Please remember to "recycle right;" buy phosphate-free soap, take all unused prescriptions to a drop-off location (pharmacy) and clean up after your pets.

It is essential for people to be aware that animal feces in waterways can lead to diseases like E. coli. Diseases from exposure to dog feces include bacterial infections, parasites and roundworms. Dog feces along the river act as a contaminate to drinking water sources, and dog fecal matter has been detected in water samples from five stations along the Santa Fe River.

Recently, a total maximum daily load was developed for the Santa Fe River by the state of New Mexico for E. coli bacteria. The largest source of this contamination appears to be pet waste, and it is impairing the primary contact and recreational uses of the river. Although this is a serious situation, there are many things we can do to positively affect the situation regarding pet waste within the watershed and river. I believe it is important to inform the community that when dog waste is carried by stormwater along the arroyos, acequias, streets and parks, it results in contamination of the Santa Fe River.

In Santa Fe County, we have made pets a part of our family. With that in mind, I would like to provide some tips to improve the situation along the Santa Fe River and all waterways, while providing access for and acceptance of our canine friends:

- Bring it: Carry a scooper bag when you walk your dog.
- Scoop it: Use the baggie like a glove, scoop the poop, invert and seal the bag.
- Toss it: It belongs in the trash.
- Place a sign: Put a "scoop the poop" sign in your yard to encourage your neighbors to scoop it up, too.
- Be a role model and practice good dog-ownership behavior. It is crucial to keep dog waste off the ground. If you see un-scooped poop, pick it up. You are sending a message to others, and hopefully your actions will encourage people to do the same.

For more information regarding these issues, I encourage you to contact the city of Santa Fe watershed coordinator at 955-6840, [mamcdonald@santafenm.gov](mailto:mamcdonald@santafenm.gov) and the Santa Fe County Sustainability Office at 505-992-3044, [cborchert@santafecountynm.gov](mailto:cborchert@santafecountynm.gov)

Water is life. Thank you for being concerned about our environment.

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