An aerial photograph showing a city on the left and a large, brownish, arid landscape on the right. A river or stream flows through the center, with a complex network of smaller channels and tributaries. The city features a grid of streets and various buildings. The landscape is mostly flat with some vegetation and a few structures.

# River and Watershed Program Update

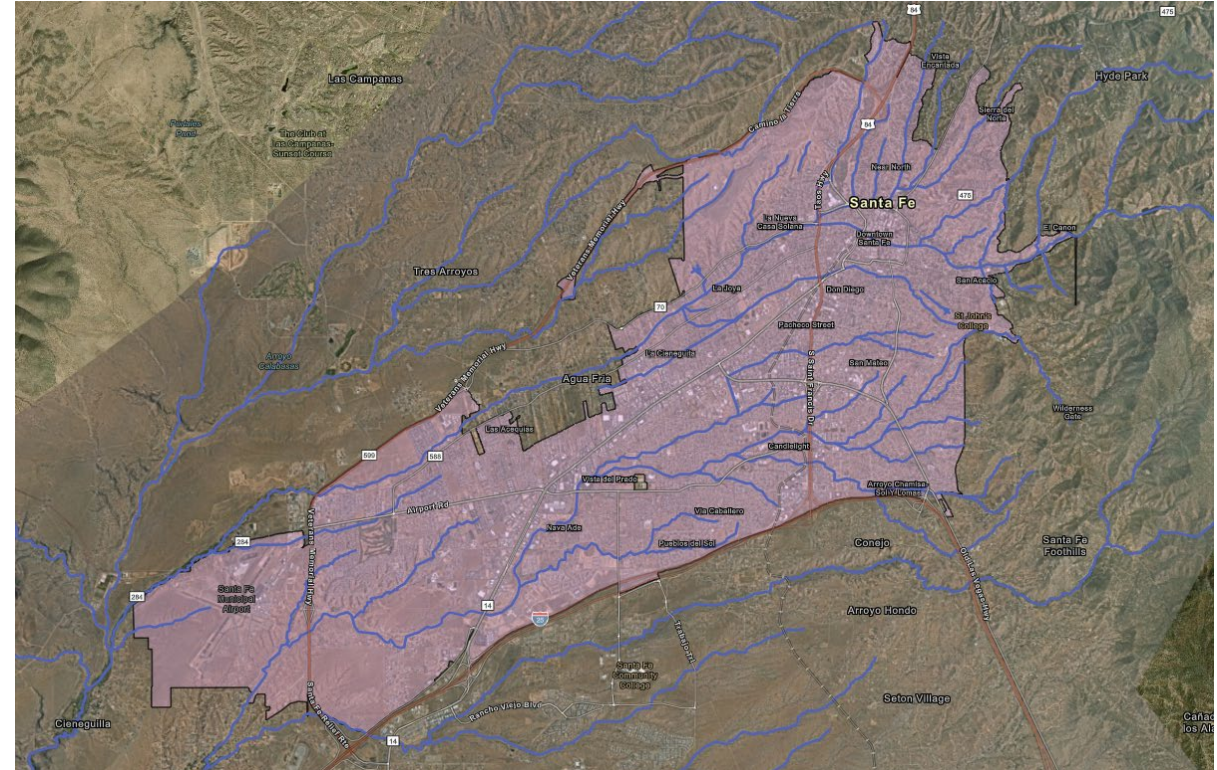
**Zoë Isaacson**

**River and Watershed Manager**

**[zisaacson@santafenm.gov](mailto:zisaacson@santafenm.gov)**

# Agenda

- **Strategic Blueprint:** grounding our work in the core objectives of the 2019 Strategic Plan
- **Delivered Results:** project completion and funding opportunities
- **Operational Strength:** enhancing regulatory compliance, securing outside funding, and building critical partnerships.
- **Strategic Outlook:** planning for the next five years, including the 2026 permit, SB21 and future initiatives.



*City of Santa Fe's Urbanized Area and Waterways managed by River and Watershed Section*

# Stormwater Management Strategic Plan 2019

Identifies Key Objectives for Developing a Robust River and Watershed Program:

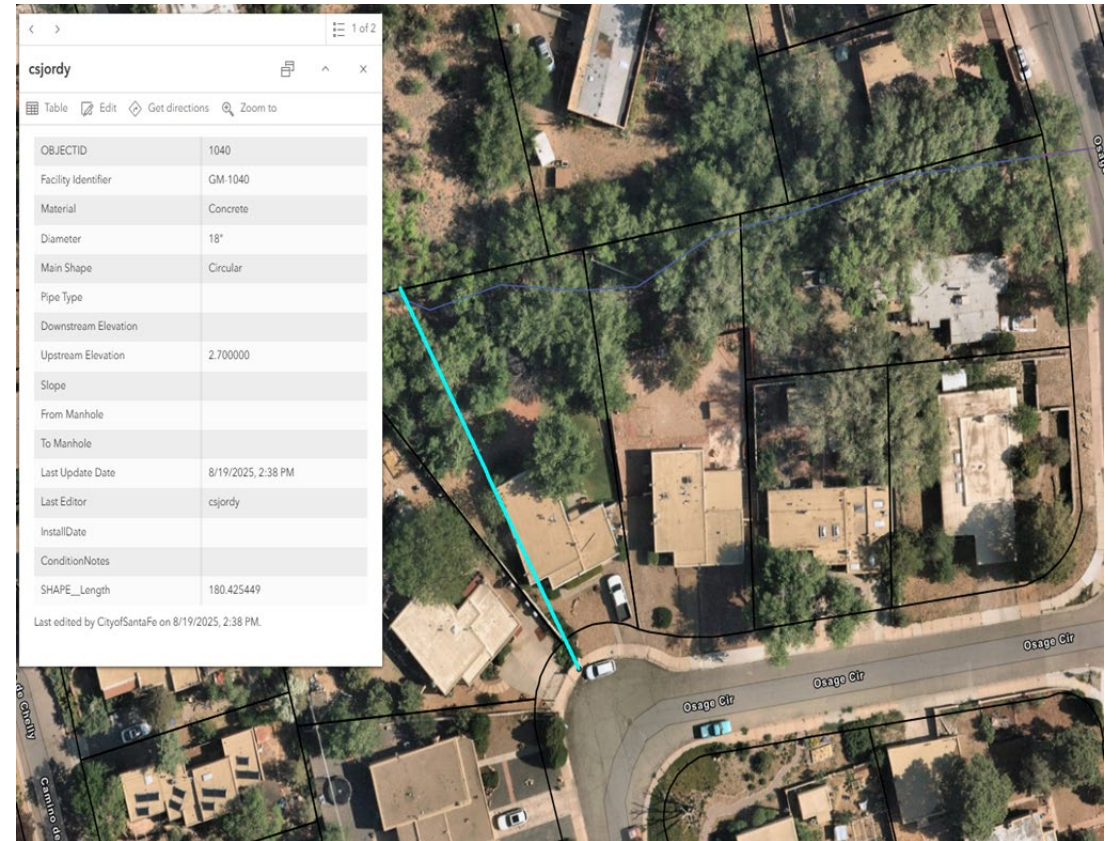
- Improve stormwater asset management with mapping and strategic project planning.
- Ensure sustainable program funding via the Stormwater Utility Service Fee and third-party opportunities.
- Meet existing and anticipate future regulatory requirements.
- Enhance public education, outreach, and participation.
- Foster collaborative partnerships across the City and community.



# Asset Management

Building on the 2019 SMSP, the section has completed:

- **Asset Inventory Collection:** Over 6,700 unique assets have been mapped, including basins, culverts, inlets, manholes outlets, outfalls and pipes.
- **Improved System Mapping:** Connecting waterways with stormwater infrastructure has refined understanding of stormwater system.
- **Purchased Asset Management Software:** OpenGov, and Bad Elf subscriptions.
- **Condition Assessment and Prioritization:** Redeveloped Arroyo Assessment Tool and field surveys to prioritize and complete projects.





# Completed Stormwater CIP Projects – Phase 1

- **Bank Stabilization and Channel Repair**
  - Nave Ade Bank Stabilization (\$295,000)
  - Santa Fe River Channel Repair and Bank Stabilization Project (\$1,500,000)
  - Arroyo de Los Chamisos North Fork Sites 1 & 2 Infrastructure Repairs and Bank Stabilization (\$450,000)
- **Drainage and Culvert Improvements**
  - Camino Santander Culvert Replacement (\$67,000)
  - Camino de Las Crucitas Trash Racks (\$100,000)
  - Camino Escondido Outfall Improvement (\$50,000)
- **Green Infrastructure and Trail Repair**
  - Midtown Redevelopment Stormwater Master Plan (\$320,000)
  - Brothers Lane Rain Garden (\$125,000)
  - Valley Dr Rain Garden Retrofit (\$52,000)
  - Tierra Contenta Trail Repair (\$80,000)
- **Vegetation Management**
  - Over 75 Acres of Riparian and Arroyo Areas thinned (\$1,000,000)

**TOTAL SPENT \$4,039,000**

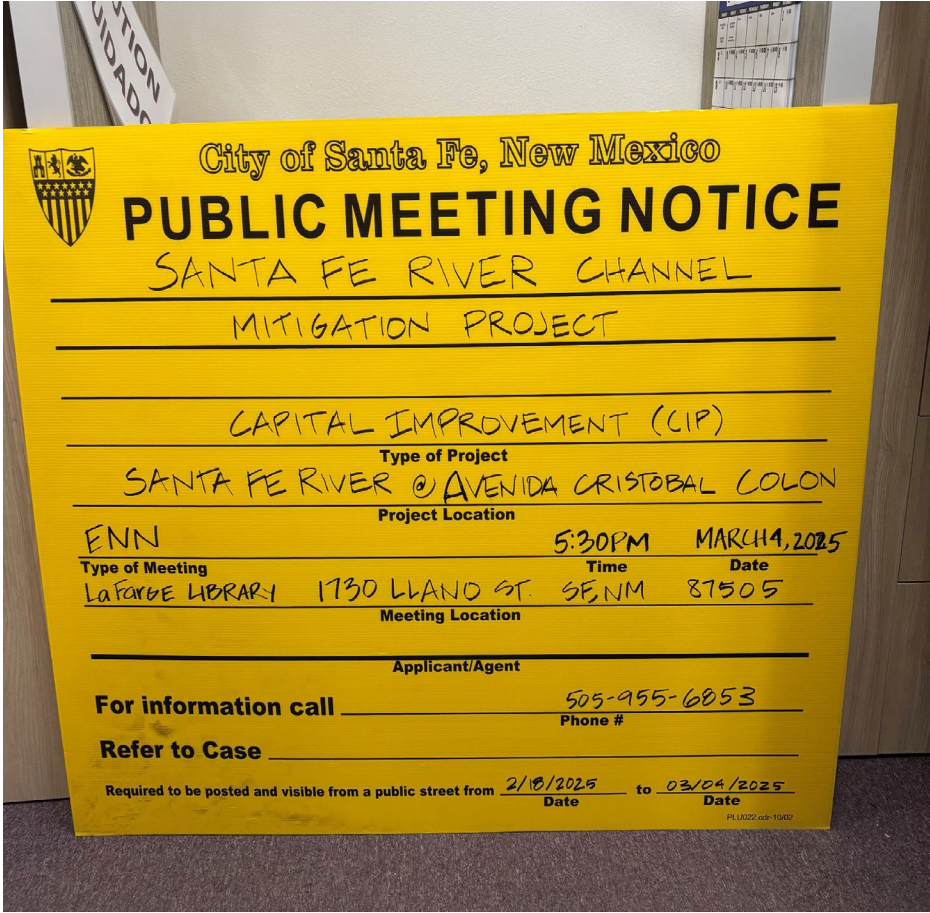


10/8/2025

# Stormwater CIP in Progress

- **Bank Stabilization and Channel Repair**
  - Arroyo de Los Chamisos Site 3 (est. \$3,000,000)
  - Bank Stabilization Arroyo Chamisos Urban Trail Repair (est. \$1,000,000)
  - Arroyo Torreon Bank Stabilization Project (est. \$2,750,000)
  - Santa Fe River Repairs at Cristobal Colon (\$1,000,000)
  
- **Green Stormwater Infrastructure**
  - Ashbaugh Park Infiltration Gallery (est. \$4,000,000)
  - Marc Brandt Park Bioswale Project (est. \$2,000,000)
  - Arroyo de Los Pinos Off-Channel Infiltration (est. \$1,500,000)
  
- **Infrastructure Improvements**
  - Osage Circle Drainage Improvements (\$220,000)
  - Vereda de Valencia Stormwater Master Plan (\$160,000)
  - West Alameda Culvert Repair (\$70,000)
  - Cerro Gordo Culvert Replacement (est. \$3,000,000)

**ESTIMATED COST FOR PROJECTS: \$18,700,000**

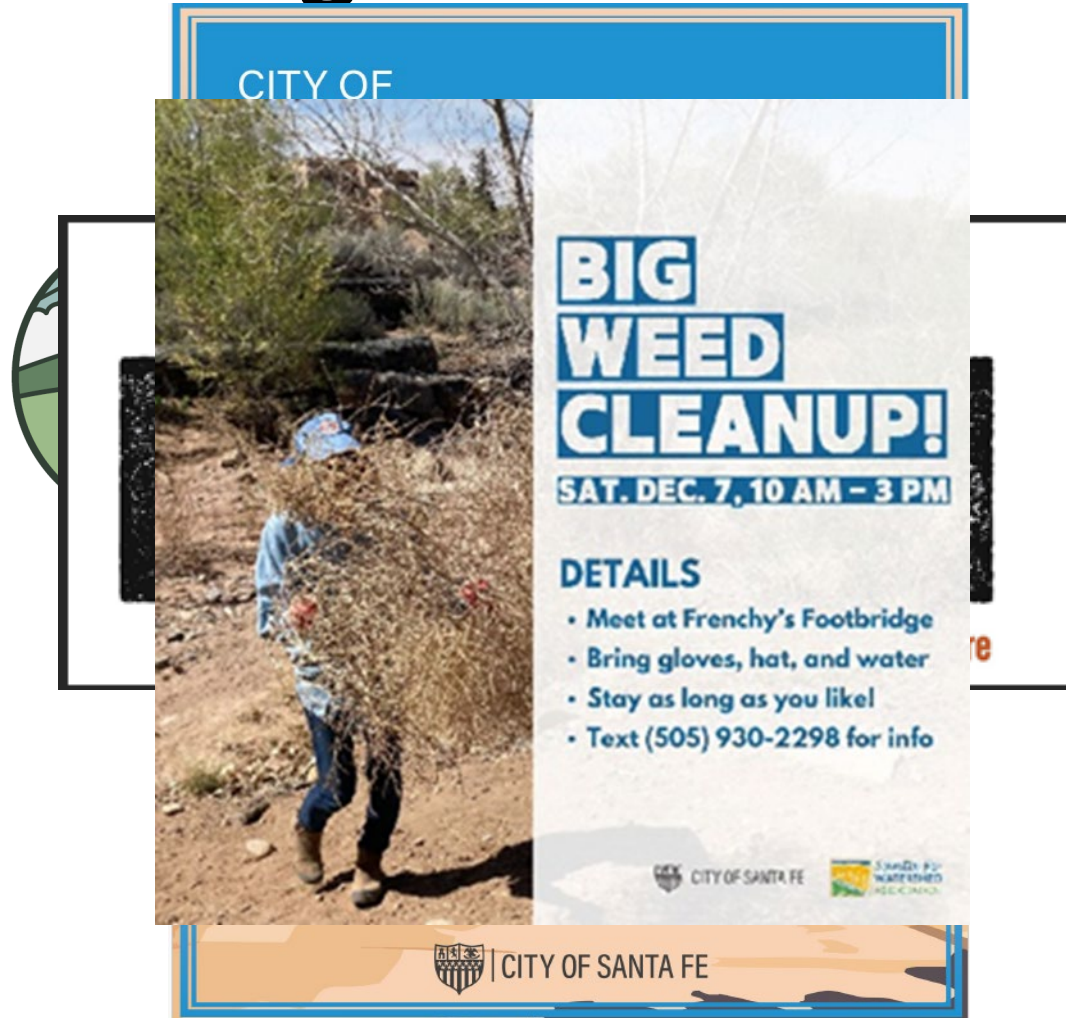


# MS4 Program Improvements for Regulatory Compliance

- **Organizational Capacity:** Successfully hired and trained a fully staffed River and Watershed Section.
- **Policy Integration:** Ensured MS4 requirements are integrated into the Land Development Code and other policy initiatives (e.g., DRT participation).
- **Stormwater Controls:** Mandated the incorporation of construction and post-construction stormwater controls into all new development plans.
- **GSI Implementation:** Successfully leveraging public and private interest to implement Green Stormwater Infrastructure in public open space, such as Santa Fe's very own Storm to Shade Program development.
- **Data Management:** Improved stormwater data collection and management using modern technology to increase staff efficiency.
- **Service Delivery:** Reduced response times for citizen concerns using innovative on-call contracts for quick deployment.
- **Standardization & Training:** Developed SOPs and updated training/educational materials to standardize public outreach and internal processes.

MS4 Minimum Control Measures (MCMs)	
1	<b>Public Education and Outreach</b> Educate the public and target audiences on potential for stormwater pollution and benefits of improving water quality
2	<b>Public Involvement and Participation</b> Create avenues for the public to get involved in improving water quality
3	<b>Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination</b> Find and eliminate sources of non-stormwater discharge that are sources of pollution and can harm water quality
4	<b>Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control</b> Monitor and minimize the release of pollutants from construction sites during construction
5	<b>Post-Construction Storm Water Management</b> Reduce the amount of stormwater runoff from development with grey and green infrastructure
6	<b>Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations</b> Ensure City facilities are maintained and inspected to prevent stormwater pollution, and train City employees on best practices for daily maintenance

# Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships

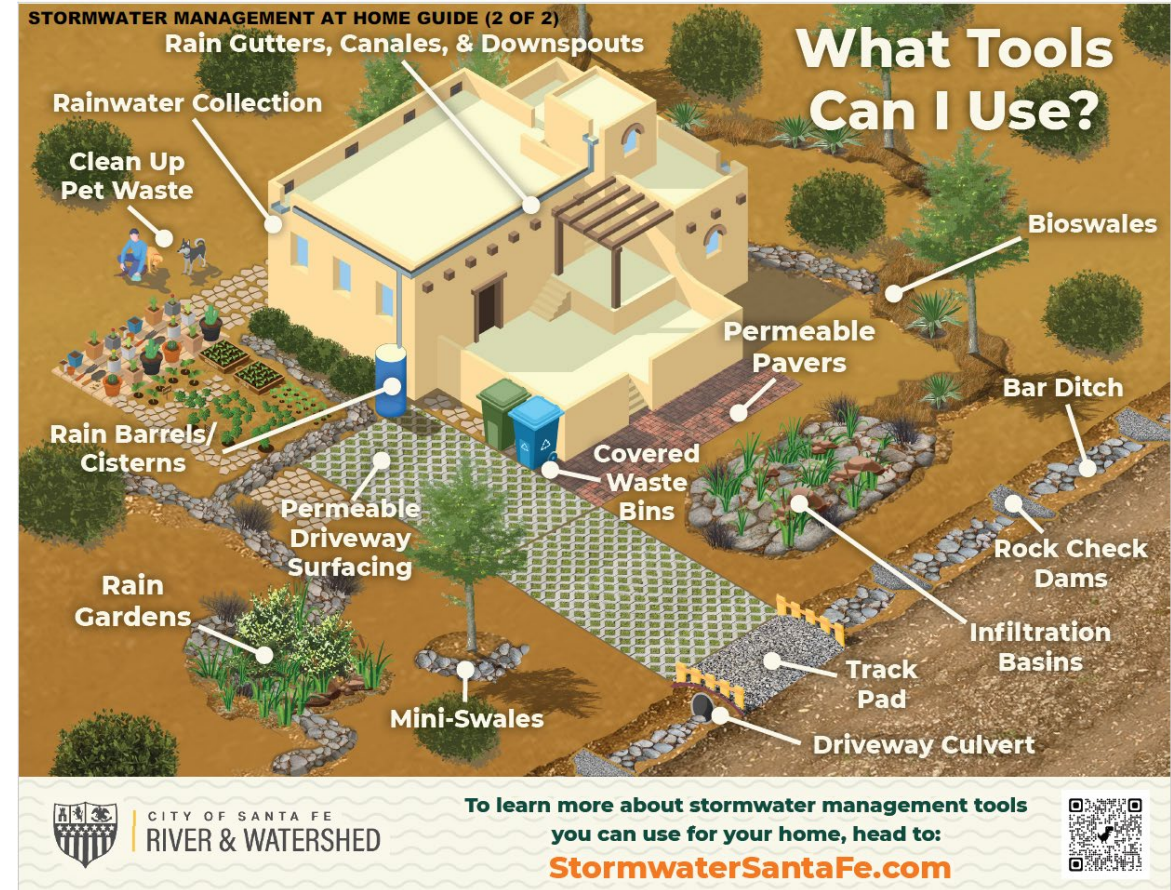


- **Santa Fe Water Quality Collaborative** (City, County, NMDOT)
- **City of SF Streets Design Guide:** Helps facilitate streamlined design guidance for developers.
- **Land Use Code Update:** Improved implementation of strategic stormwater management initiatives.
- **Leveraging expertise and interest within the community:** (SFWA, FullCircle, Trash Pandas, Friends of the Santa Fe River, Santa Fe River Commission)

# Public Education and Outreach

## Key Initiatives

- **Website Redesign Boosted Engagement** (increased traffic by 50 % from 614 views to 1240 view per 4 months period, not counting 1338 views for River Talks)
- **River Talks Series** (over 700 attendees over 7 years of talks)
- **Green Waste and Household Hazardous Waste Campaign** (radio ads and social media postings)
- **New Educational Brochures for Commercial and Residential Stormwater Pollutants** (restaurants, autobody shops, pesticide handlers, HOAs, and others)
- **Participation in Technical Conferences as Presenters and Panelists** (Land and Water Summit, Site Santa Fe Water Talks, Homewise Livability Series, Climate Masters, Radio, Santa Fe New Mexican, NM Floodplain Managers annual conference, etc)



# Pursue Outside Funding Opportunities

## FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants (OEM Partnership)

- Ashbaugh Park Infiltration Gallery (~\$750,000)
- Marc Brandt Park Bioswale Project (~\$350,000)
- Cerro Gordo Culvert Study (~\$800,000)
- Pending Award (Arroyo Torreon Bank Stabilization, Santa Fe River Repairs)

## NM Matching Grant Fund (OEM Partnership)

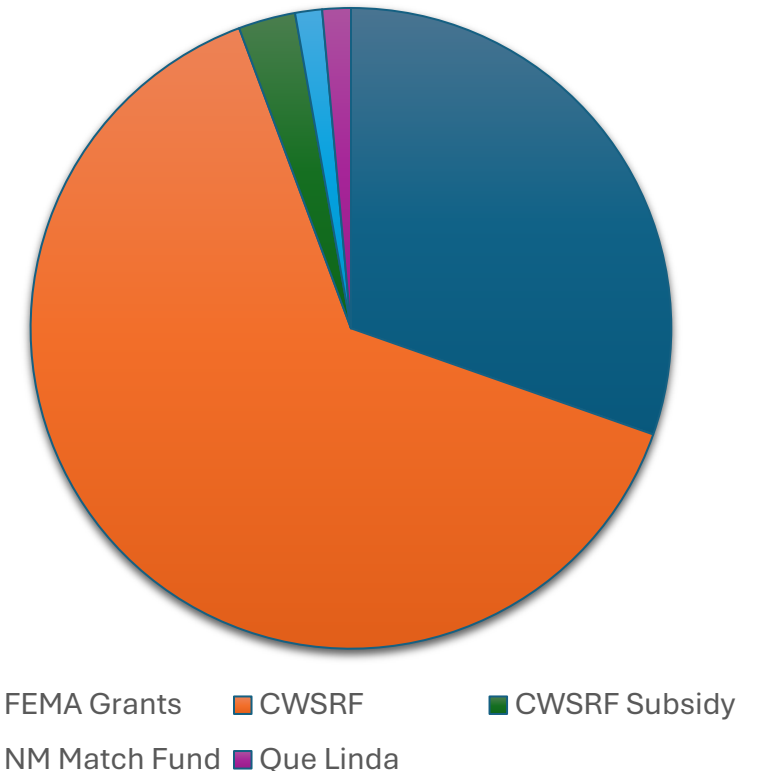
- Marc Brandt Park Bioswale Project (\$85,000)

## Clean Water State Revolving Fund (\$4.18M)

- Santa Fe Channel Repairs and Bank Stabilization (\$1.6M)
- Arroyo de Los Chamisos Sites 1 & 2 (\$430,000)
- Arroyo de Los Chamisos Urban Trail Repair (~\$1M, ITB process started)

## NMDOT Que Linda Grant - \$90,000

Award \$6.26M



# 5-Year Outlook: Regulatory Mandates & Strategic Alignment

- **Federal & State Mandates:** Directly address and prepare for the 2026 MS4 Permit Issuance and the NMED Primacy Ruling (SB21).
- **Strategic Planning & Prioritization:** Complete the update of the Stormwater Management Strategic Plan and utilize the 2025 Arroyo Assessment Matrix for all capital projects.
- **Regulatory Alignment & Quality Control:** Realign City Code to meet new permit requirements and establish a certified QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan) for the stormwater quality testing program.
- **Maintenance & Innovation:** Develop a proactive, contractor-led maintenance schedule for vegetation and arroyo cleaning to maintain channel function.
- **Outreach & Research Partnerships:** Expand public education through targeted working groups and forge a UNM partnership to advance GSI research.
- **Santa Fe's Storm to Shade Program:** Streamline curb-cut permitting for rain gardens, standardize GSI retrofits in public rights-of way, maintenance MOUs
- **Sustainable Funding:** Secure the long-term solvency of the River and Watershed program through the implementation of the Stormwater Utility Service Fee.
- **Capacity Building:** Integrate new OpenGov modules across the program to ensure data-driven reporting and transparent asset management.

