

Sample Talking Points in Support of Pecos ONRW Designation From Multiple Stakeholder Perspectives:

Acequia Traditional Uses

- I support the Pecos ONRW Petition to protect 14 miles of the Pecos River and 162 miles of tributaries within the Pecos River Watershed as Outstanding Waters (officially referred to as Outstanding National Resource Waters or ONRWs) under the Clean Water Act.
- Pecos ONRW designation will protect traditional land and water uses, such as existing grazing and ranching, and safeguard waterways from degradation like mining, development and transportation, waste disposal, recreational overuse, and the impacts of climate change, which is why there is such broad and wide ranging support in the Pecos community for Outstanding Waters protections.
- Additionally, the designation will protect the 55 acequias in the Upper Pecos watershed without adding any additional requirements or restrictions on acequia operation or maintenance.
- Communities surrounding the Upper Pecos Watershed depend on clean water in the Pecos to support agriculture, recreation, and the local economy.

Environment and Climate Change

- The rivers within the Upper Pecos Watershed serve as a home to one of the few remaining populations of New Mexico's native cutthroat trout. The watershed is also home to several endangered, threatened, or at risk species, including the Mexican spotted owl and the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout. Additionally, Rocky Mountain bighorn, elk, mule deer, mountain lions, bobcats, and bald eagles live in the watershed.
- New Mexico is experiencing one of the worst droughts in recent history. Safeguarding the lifeblood of our communities -- our rivers-- is critical in sustaining our communities, wildlife habitat, and mitigating against the worst impacts of climate change.

Economy and Community Livelihood

- The Upper Pecos Watershed draws locals and visitors to hike, bike, camp, hunt, fish, ride horseback, and more who, in turn, help support local businesses.

Fly-fishing guides have named the Upper Pecos 6th among the “11 best places to fly fish in New Mexico.”

- Protecting the Pecos as Outstanding is not just good for farming, and our health and wellbeing, but it is also good for our bottom line. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation contributes \$2.4 billion to New Mexico’s economy, every year. Additionally, the Bureau ranked the Land of Enchantment as 2nd among all states in compensation growth, showing that there is a bright future for outdoor recreation wages and livelihoods.
- As our community continues to weather the COVID-19 pandemic, more people seek out nature for healing, solace, and exercise, and we see how critical the Pecos Watershed is for physical and mental health. In addition, as many of our iconic New Mexico outdoor destinations are seeing exponential growth in visitation, Outstanding Water protections will give our state and local communities the tools to protect our special places from “being loved to death”.