

# SAN JUAN - CHAMA: GOT WATER?

## SAN JUAN CHAMA WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP- VISION

When a child in Albuquerque turns on the tap and drinks a glass of water, it originates in the San-Juan Chama Watershed. This same water provides life for an elk on a ridgetop, a farmer's crops fed by the acequia, an aspen in the forest, and a silvery minnow in the Rio Grande. Our vision of productive forests and watersheds is stewarded by a diverse community working across boundaries to realize regional goals.

### SAN JUAN – CHAMA WATER BENEFICIARIES

City of  
Albuquerque

Bernalillo County

City of Santa Fe

City of Los Alamos

Village of Los  
Lunas

City of Espanola

Village of Taos

Town of Belen

Town of Bernalillo

Jicarilla Apache  
Nation

Middle Rio Grande  
Conservancy  
District

Pojoaque Valley  
Irrigation District

Heron Lake State  
Park

El Vado Reservoir

### San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership

In New Mexico, water is life. El agua es vida.

When a child in Albuquerque turns on the tap and drinks a glass of water, it originates in the headwaters of the San-Juan Chama region of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. This same water provides life for an elk on a ridgetop, a farmer's crops fed by the acequia, an aspen in the forest, and a silvery minnow in the Rio Grande.

Historically, a significant portion of these headwaters naturally flowed west into the Colorado River. However, in 1971, this water was diverted through the tunnels of the [San Juan – Chama Diversion Project](#) into the Rio Grande basin, and eventually all the way down to Albuquerque. The San Juan – Chama Diversion Project supplies water for approximately 50% of Santa Fe County and 90% of Bernalillo County – that's 650,000 people and nearly a third of New Mexico's population!

The San Juan – Chama diversion waters plus the remaining Rio Grande headwaters provide critical natural resources to the people that live there, and many users downstream.

[Wildfire](#), insects, and drought threaten these critical headwater forests. Although catastrophic wildfire is by itself tragic, much of the long-term damage caused by fire occurs from floods when rainfall scours the burnt and bare slopes. These post-fire flooding events destroy agricultural production and affect the volume and quality of New Mexico's water supply.

Our land, trees, wildlife, culture and people are all connected through water. And in order to protect New Mexico's vital source waters – and the forests that keep them safe – [conservation minded private landowners](#) and key partners jump-started the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership. These same private landowners that helped start the partnership also manage over 50% of the lands that the supply the San Juan – Chama diversion waters. This is a unique opportunity because these landowners

directly manage their lands with forest health, agriculture, wildlife, and watershed resilience in mind.

Here's what the **San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership** is doing to protect New Mexico's source waters and the rural communities that rely on them.

1. Increasing the overall health and resilience of our headwater forests to [improve water quality and quantity](#) through sustainable forest management practices that include thinning and prescribed burns. This will reduce the threat of wildfire - saving tens of millions of dollars in wildfire damage, debris flows, and mitigation costs to the taxpayer.
2. Promoting the use of biomass from forest treatments to create jobs in the headwaters region through a local and sustainable [bioenergy industry](#).
3. Supporting the construction of a [wastewater treatment plant](#) in Chama that improves water quality, fisheries, and local business and recreational opportunities in the rural communities of northern New Mexico.
4. [Working with landowners](#) on riparian restoration and agricultural efficiency projects to get the most out of each drop of water.

Our communities, all the way from Pagosa Springs, Colorado to Albuquerque, New Mexico hold the future of the forest and our water in their hands.

Our vision of productive forests and watersheds is stewarded by a diverse community working across traditional boundaries to realize regional goals. This is the San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership.

Please Join Us: [www.sanjuanchama.org](http://www.sanjuanchama.org)