

Las Huertas Canyon
**Watershed Restoration Action Strategy
(WRAS)**

Version 2.0

September 30, 2005

Prepared by the Las Huertas Watershed Project, Placitas, New Mexico

Rcid F. Bandeen, F.G. Principal Author


Las Huertas Watershed WRAS, Version 2.0

September 30, 2005

if not properly managed, leading to erosion, incising of drainages, and associated increased siltation/sedimentation in the Creek. ORV and non-motorized recreation may also contribute to erosion by establishing trails that become drainage pathways that erode during runoff events.

Mining Operations

Another allowable use of BLM land is leasing for mining. Lafarge North America Inc. conducts gravel mining at the northern end of the watershed. Lafarge operates the Placitas Sand and Gravel operation on 800 acres leased from BLM that are closely surrounded by several Placitas area subdivisions (DeMello, 2005). Lafarge additionally operates the Santa Ana pit and Santa Ana asphalt plant, both on and abutting the Santa Ana Reservation and BLM land. Lafarge may expand mining operations on the Santa Ana pit eastward onto an additional 275 acres of BLM lease land (DeMello, 2005).



Petroleum Product Pipelines

Several petroleum product pipelines traverse the northern portion of the Las Huertas Watershed. These pipelines are contained in two corridors that enter the east side of the watershed and merge within the Placitas Open Space (Figure 7). A major pipeline corridor operated by the Mid-America Pipeline Company (MAPL) borders Las Huertas Creek on private land, the POS, BLM and finally Santa Ana Pueblo land. An Environmental Assessment was recently published proposing the construction of an additional natural gas liquids pipeline within the Placitas watershed pipeline section, calling for the expansion of the existing pipeline right of way by 25 feet (Diven, 2005). Recent local product leak and release incidents, together with recent spectacular pipeline explosion accidents involving human fatalities near Carlsbad, New Mexico, and Bellingham, Washington continue to make the Placitas pipeline corridors a major environmental and human health and safety concern of local residents (LPA, 2005a).

Private Property Owners

Land use by private property holders in the watershed is primarily residential. The creek flows through private properties, and most of the lower perennial reach of the Creek is on private property (Figures 3 and 7). Private land uses in the lower canyon include limited livestock and equestrian grazing, and small-scale agriculture.

Most small-scale agriculture in the Placitas area operates through one of three membership acequias: 1). Las Acequias de Placitas; 2). Rosa de Castilla; and 3). Las Huertas Community