

**Annual Report of the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly**  
**Prepared June 25, 2010**  
**By Kevin Bean**

Water in the Middle Rio Grande -- like most places -- is not simply a matter of inches of precipitation and evaporation. Nor is it just about acre-feet of withdrawals and depletions or of return flows and recharge rates, as important as that data is. Water, rather, is about life and about what makes it enjoyable and worthwhile. As such it's not the numbers themselves that matter but what those numbers mean to the people, plants and animals who call this valley home.

Seven months ago, while pondering the question of how to get people to pay more attention to what the data are telling us, the Water Assembly realized that the numbers alone weren't telling the whole story and might actually be obscuring the reality they were supposed to reveal. What was missing, we realized, was a real-world context for making sense of them.

That realization led to the development of A Future Story, the first phase of the Water Assembly's Futures Project. The story was presented publicly for the first time at the June 12, 2010 annual Assembly.

The story is a fictional, first-hand account of life in the Middle Rio Grande in 2025 -- absent any new policies or actions that might alter the course we're on. Accompanying the story are several technical appendices prepared by a team of experts recruited by the Assembly.

As originally conceived phase two of the Futures Project would consist of engaging the general public and community leaders in developing alternative futures, perhaps based on one or more key interventions that could lead to a different outcome. Phase three would consist of publicizing, selecting, and implementing, through a community process, a preferred alternative future and a process for getting there.

Those actions, however, depend on first persuading people that the course we're on is unsustainable. We think the Future Story does a good job of making that case, and our intent is that it be widely told.

In addition to the Futures Project, over the last year we also served as an award sponsor in the Central NM Science and Engineering Research Challenge, March 2010. The Assembly awarded prizes to 14 participants. The winners are listed on our web site.

We organized, publicized and conducted the annual meeting of the Water Assembly.

We also held regular board and executive committee meetings, maintained a list serve, maintained a web site and several of our members attended and participated in other water-related meetings.

For more information, see the Assembly's web site at [www.WaterAssembly.org](http://www.WaterAssembly.org)