

# MUNICIPAL WATER USE

Water & Natural Resources Committee

Adrienne L. Widmer, P.E.

Las Cruces Utilities Director

August 19, 2025



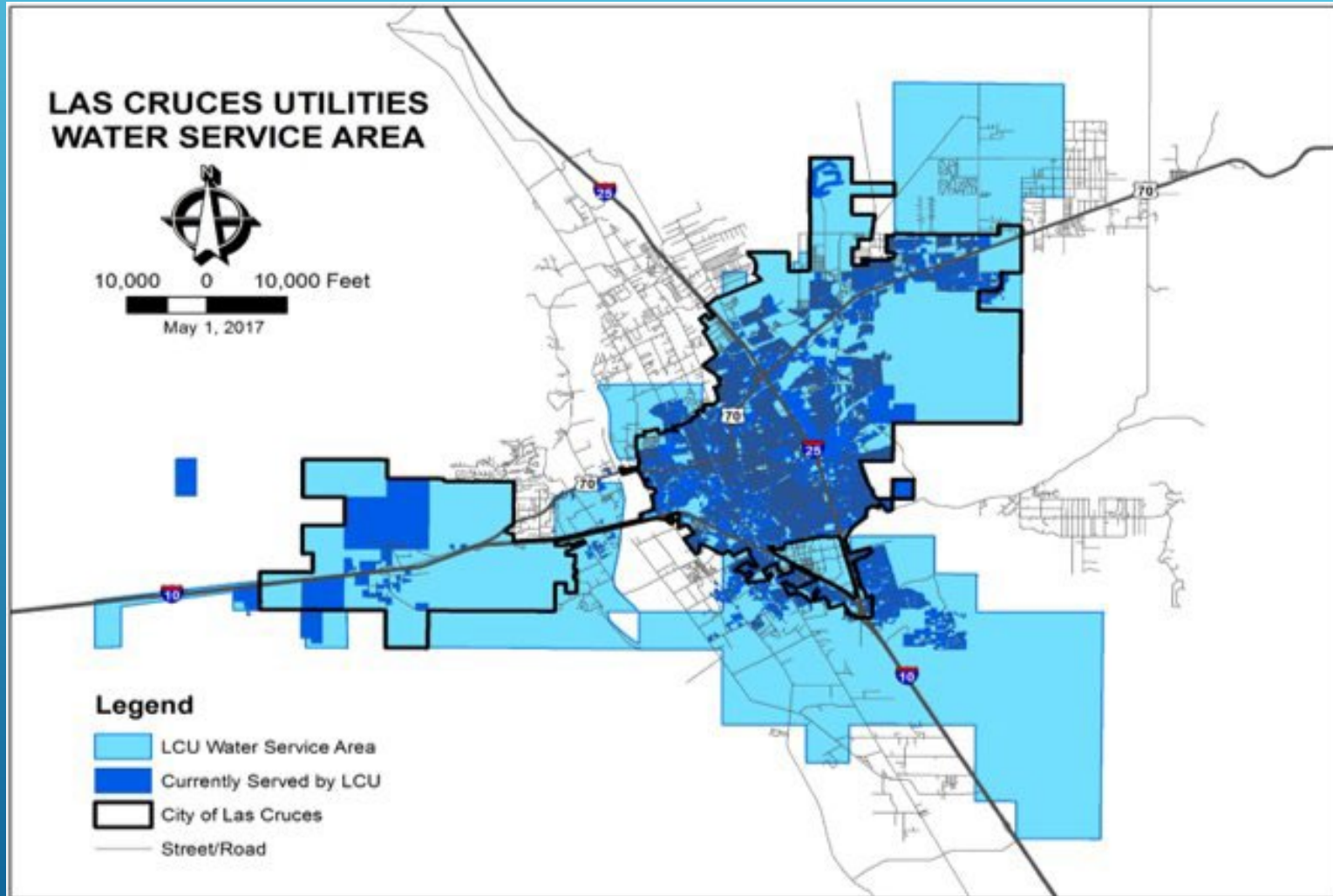
CITY OF LAS CRUCES



# WATER OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE LINE OF BUSINESS

- ✓ 38,905 meters
- ✓ Over 4,000 fire hydrants
- ✓ Over 10,000 valves
- ✓ Over 700 miles of water distribution lines
- ✓ Operate over 40 wells
- ✓ 42 MGD capacity
- ✓ 12 reservoirs with 25.4 MG capacity
- ✓ 14 booster stations
- ✓ 17 active wells sites
- ✓ 4 pressure tanks
- ✓ Staff of 54, plus 3 contract
- ✓ Operating budget \$19.77M
- ✓ Personnel budget \$4.4M
- ✓ Capital budget \$2.51M
- ✓ Equipment budget \$2.15M

# WATER USE HISTORY



- ✓ Acequia Madre de Las Cruces – 1840s
- ✓ Neighborhood Wells – 1880s
- ✓ Municipal Well System Initiated – 1905
- ✓ 1926 Elected to borrow money for a sanitary sewer disposal plant O140



**CITY OF LAS CRUCES  
40-YEAR WATER  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**



by

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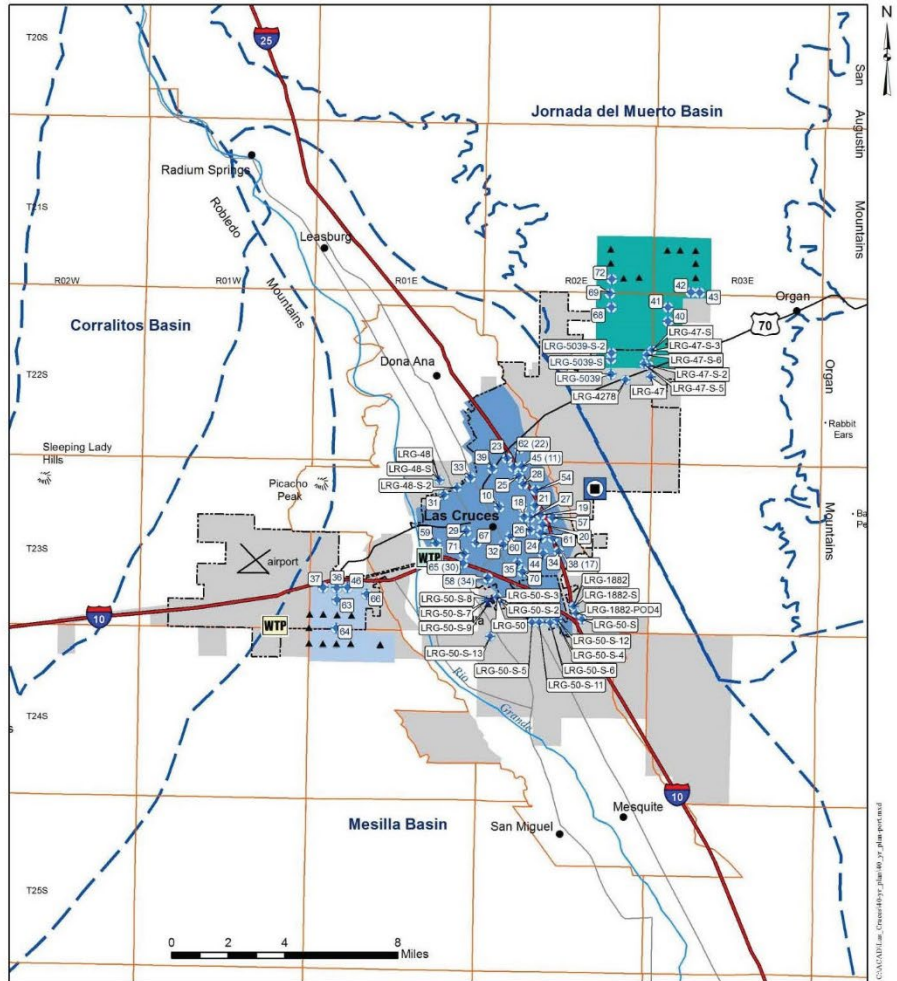
Las Cruces Utilities  
City of Las Cruces



April 2017

*Shomaker*

- ✓ 40-Year Water Development Plan
  - ✓ Mandated for Cities
  - ✓ Advanced Planning for no shortages during drought and growth
  - ✓ Approved by State Engineer



Explanation		
	Las Cruces city limits (Jan. 2016)	Well Field
	basin boundary	East Mesa
	City of Las Cruces water rights place-of-use (April 2017)	Valley
		West Mesa

- ✓ Valley Well Field
- ✓ West Mesa Well Field
- ✓ East Mesa Well Field
  - ✓ Imports Water to the Rio Grande
- ✓ Active – Managed Demand Use
- ✓ Inactive – Water Level Monitoring

# TYPICAL WATER USERS

- ✓ 83,632 SFR Population
- ✓ 30,880 MFR Population
- ✓ 18 Elementary Schools – 8,239 Students
- ✓ 4 Middle Schools – 3,344 Students
- ✓ 4 High Schools – 6,546 Students
- ✓ 10 Private/Charter Schools – 1,452 Students
- ✓ 3 Hospitals – 3,650 Employees
- ✓ Example Industrial Use
  - ✓ Olam – 100 to 200 Employees
  - ✓ Saputo Dairy – 460 Employees
  - ✓ Alaska Industries – 310 Employees
- ✓ Numerous Commercial Use
- ✓ Parks, Trails, Sport Fields
- ✓ Emergency Water Supply Backup
  - ✓ Town of Mesilla
  - ✓ Dona Ana MDWCA

# TOP RANKINGS CITY 2001 – 2021

## NUMEROUS MAGAZINES AND ORGANIZATIONS

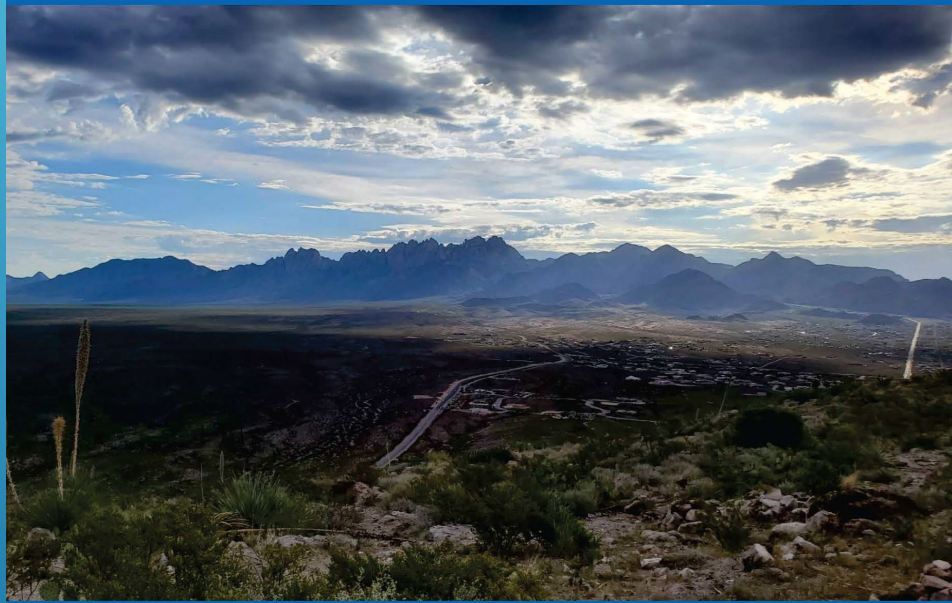
- ✓ Best Places to Live
- ✓ Top 10 for Hispanics to Live
- ✓ Best Places to Retire
- ✓ Best Small Metro Area for Business & Careers
- ✓ Top 50 Motorcoach Destination
- ✓ Top Sports Town of Year
- ✓ Top 10 Most Overlooked City
- ✓ Most Secure Place to Live for a Medium-Sized City
- ✓ Top 10 Best Performing City
- ✓ Top 20 Towns of the Future
- ✓ Top 25 Cities for Jobs
- ✓ Runner Up for Best Sustainable Community
- ✓ Top Rankings for Best-Run City
- ✓ Tied for Number 1 for Most Charitable City
- ✓ Fittest City in New Mexico
- ✓ One of Best Cities for K-12 Teachers

# CURRENT GROWTH TRENDS

- ✓ 648 New Residential Permits issued 2024 with project valuations of \$194M
- ✓ 129 New Commercial Permits issued 2024 with project valuations of \$197M
- ✓ Industrial Growth
  - ✓ Saputo expansion for string cheese addition to process
  - ✓ Two 200,000 sf of cold storage facilities breaking ground July-August 2025
- ✓ Electronic Caregiver – expected to add 1,000 jobs in the next 5 years
- ✓ Mesilla Valley Lost Industrial/Commercial Growth Opportunities:
  - ✓ Back Office, Hi-Tech, Logistics & Distribution, Manufacturing, Valued Added Agriculture



ANNUAL EVALUATION OF  
2021 WATER-LEVEL MONITORING DATA  
FROM THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES  
WATER SUPPLY WELLS, NEW MEXICO



prepared by



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LAS CRUCES UTILITIES  
City of Las Cruces, New Mexico



AUGUST 2022



# CURRENT AND PROACTIVE PLANNING

- ✓ Water Level Monitoring – 2011
- ✓ Water Quality Meets All State and Federal Regulations for Potable Water Use
- ✓ East Mesa Water Reclamation
- ✓ Conceptual Aquifer Recovery and Reuse Projects

# GROUNDWATER DIVERSIONS

 <b>Three (3) Year Comparison and Summary of Metered Groundwater Diversions in the Lower Rio Grande Water Master District</b> 								
Category	2021		2022		2023		3-Year Total	
<b>Irrigation</b>	264,430	84.8%	239,098	84.5%	229,694	82.34%	733,222	83.9%
<b>Drinking Water: Municipal, Mutual Domestic, and Individual Domestic Supply (includes 2,400 Ac-Ft of estimated unmetered domestic)</b>	39,234	12.6%	37,234	13.2%	41,292	14.8%	117,760	13.5%
City of Las Cruces	21,049		20,845		20,268			
New Mexico State University	3,080		1,964		2,262			
Mutual Domestic and Other Municipal	11,665		10,860		10,071			
Other Drinking Water	3,440		3,565		8,690			
<b>Commercial/Industrial/Dairy</b>	7,879	2.5%	6,027	2.1%	7,916	2.8%	21,822	2.5%
<b>All Other Uses</b>	400	0.1%	491	0.2%	41	<0.1%	932	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311,943</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>282,850</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>278,943</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>873,736</b>	<b>100%</b>

Diversion amounts are provided in acre-feet. Reasonable efforts were made by the office of the State Engineer (OSE) to verify this data. However, this data may be subject to change if more information becomes available. 4-25-2024 JCB, LRG Water Master.

Table 2

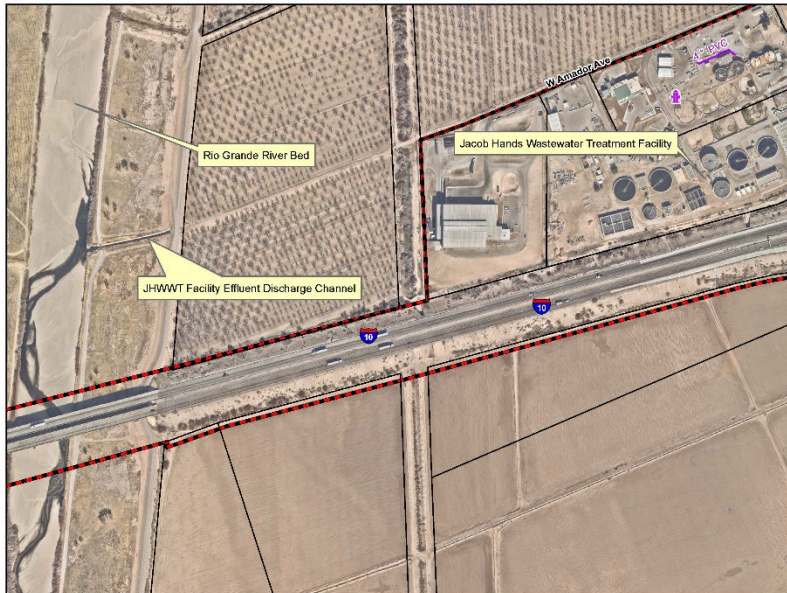
- ✓ City of Las Cruces
  - ✓ 7.3% Total Pumping
- ✓ Regional Wastewater Treatment
  - ✓ Return Flow ≈ 10,665 AF 2023
- ✓ Only groundwater user turning in GPCD calculator and AWWA Audit to OSE



# MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT

EMWRF = 1.0 MGD Capacity

Reclaimed Water to 2 Parks, Recreational Facility, Restoration Site, Golf Course, High School, City Medians, Closed Landfill, excess returned to Rio Grande via JHWWTF



JHWWTF = 13.5 MGD Capacity  
9.5 MGD Average Treatment  
Returns effluent to Rio Grande 24/7/365



# WATER CONSERVATION

- ✓ Annual OSE gpcd Calculator
  - ✓ 2023 Total gpcd = 165.59
  - ✓ 2022 Total gpcd = 163.40
    - ✓ Met 2030 goal of 165 gpcd
  - ✓ 2023 SFR gpcd = 117.67
  - ✓ 2022 SFR gpcd = 113.23
    - ✓ Met 2030 goal of 115 gpcd
- ✓ Advanced Metering Infrastructure
- ✓ Utility Hawk
- ✓ NO-DES Equipment
- ✓ Violations
- ✓ Water Restriction
  - ✓ Ordinance 14 – May 1909 No Street Sprinkling
  - ✓ Ordinance 25 – July 1912 Immediate Leak Repair
  - ✓ Ordinance 44 – April 1914 Domestic Use Only

## LAS CRUCES UTILITIES

### WATER CONSERVATION REGULATIONS

#### WHY DOES LAS CRUCES HAVE WATER RESTRICTIONS?

The City of Las Cruces restricts outdoor watering in the interest of water conservation.

Day-of-week restrictions help prevent overwatering of landscapes. Deeper, less frequent watering will cause plants to send their roots deeper and survive longer without water. Some newly planted plants may require daily watering to get established and residents may request a variance when this applies.

Time-of-day restrictions, which are in effect April through September, help reduce evaporation losses during watering.

#### WATERING PROHIBITIONS

While there are many ways to waste water, a few of them are prohibited by City regulations:

- Water flowing beyond property boundaries, for example, onto the street or sidewalk.
- Watering so much that it ponds on the property.
- Using a hose without a shut-off valve to wash a vehicle.
  - We suggest you use two buckets—one bucket of soapy water, and a second bucket of clean water for rinsing.
- Using a hose to clean impervious surfaces, for example driveways and sidewalks.
  - Use a broom instead.
- Using a hose to clean oil and hazardous chemicals.
  - For oil spots, first apply kitty litter and most of it can be removed without water. Then use a bucket of soapy water and a brush to clean off the remainder.

#### WATERING RESTRICTIONS

The restrictions apply to all residential and commercial properties served by Las Cruces Utilities.

- Outdoor watering for odd-numbered addresses is only allowed on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday.
- Even addresses allowed only on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.
- Between April 1st and September 30th all outdoor watering is prohibited between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

#### Warm Season Outdoor Watering

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
10:00 a.m. - 6:59 a.m.	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
10:00 a.m. - 6:59 p.m.	Gray	Gray	Gray	Gray	Gray	Gray	Gray
6:00 p.m. - 11:59 p.m.	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Watering Prohibited

Gray=Watering Prohibited    Teal=Odd addresses    Green=Even addresses

#### Cool Season Outdoor Watering

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
12:00 a.m. - 11:59 p.m.	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Watering Prohibited

Gray=Watering Prohibited    Teal=Odd addresses    Green=Even addresses

For more information about watering restrictions, visit the Water Conservation Program web pages at [www.lcutilities.org/waterconservation](http://www.lcutilities.org/waterconservation)



Las Cruces Utilities

Water Conservation Program

[rh Diaz@lascruces.gov](mailto:rh Diaz@lascruces.gov) (575) 528-3549

#### REPORT WATER WASTE

- The Water Waste Hotline for reporting water waste and watering violations is (575) 528-4444. If you see water being wasted, please report it.
- Be prepared to provide the date and approximate time, street address or intersections, and what you observed.

#### WATERING VIOLATION FEES

The following fees may be assessed for watering violations:

First:	no fee
Second:	\$20
<i>optional audit at customer's expense in lieu of fee</i>	
Third:	\$30
Fourth:	\$40
Fifth and subsequent:	\$50

*Each day that watering takes place can be a separate violation.*



# WATER CONSERVATION

- ✓ Customer and Community Education
  - ✓ Water Festival for grade schoolers
  - ✓ National Night Out
  - ✓ Lush n Lean Program: Water wise for gardens and landscaping workshops
    - ✓ Landscaping, irrigation, gardening, related topics
  - ✓ Spring Stroll: Demonstration Garden
- ✓ Compliance:
  - ✓ Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer Watering Restrictions
  - ✓ Water Audits: Commercial outdoor watering efficiency
  - ✓ Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper certification program for Irrigators and Maintenance Personnel
    - ✓ 3 Water Conservation Staff
    - ✓ 5 Parks & Recreation Staff
    - ✓ 1 Las Cruces Public Schools Facilities Supervisor
  - ✓ Water Violations
    - ✓ Administrative Fines are rare due to educational success (2 in the last 4 years to date)
    - ✓ 50 in 2025 as of July 29

# REALITY WITH DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

- ✓ What is the most efficient water conservation goal?
  - ✓ System and water quality based
- ✓ Water system built to provide potable water and fire protection
- ✓ Too much conservation can cause water quality complaints
- ✓ Water quality complaints = flushing = more pumping to replace
  - ✓ Water waste, non-revenue, increased disinfection and electric costs
  - ✓ NO-DES: Need multiple units (\$500k/ea) and 3 service technicians for each
  - ✓ Increased rates due to non-revenue and increased operational costs

# FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ 2025 partnered with EBID for pilot passive recharge project at Burn Lake using Las Cruces Surface Water allotment
- ✓ East Mesa effluent through JHWWTF is imported water into the Mesilla Basin
- ✓ Plan effluent passive recharge projects using reclaimed water
  - ✓ New satellite plant planned for the East Mesa
- ✓ Plan direct reuse when water quality regulations are adopted by NMED

**QUESTIONS?**