



## Environment Department

SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR

Ryan Flynn, Cabinet Secretary  
Butch Tongate, Deputy Secretary

### **NEWS RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Allison Scott Majure  
Communications Director  
New Mexico Environment Department  
505.231.8800 | [Allison.majure@state.nm.us](mailto:Allison.majure@state.nm.us)

*NMED's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.*

### **San Juan County Fair: Free Domestic Well Water Testing Monday-Saturday** *Gold King Mine Spill Now Estimated at 3 Million Gallons*

**Santa Fe** – In response to the August 5th spill of mine waste into the Animas River, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are partnering to test private domestic water supply wells, located in the Animas River valley in New Mexico. Testing will identify metals that are of concern in relation to the spill, and other parameters that help in understanding the general quality of well water.

“We are mobilizing a team of scientists, engineers, and technical specialists, in concert with the Environmental Protection Agency, to staff a station outside the San Juan County Fair that can provide free well water testing for domestic wells all week long,” said Environment Department Secretary Ryan Flynn. Further water testing details can be found on the informational flyer posted at [www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org](http://www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org).

The following field tests will be performed at the Fairground testing station:

- Iron, nitrate and fluoride using a HACH colorimeter
- pH using colormetric and electrometric instruments
- specific conductance and temperature using YSI or other meters.

Owners of wells along the Animas River flood plain will be prioritized. (A listing of all wells within 1.5 miles of the Animas River can be found at [www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org](http://www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org).) If warranted, certain wells may also be flagged for additional laboratory testing.

Prior to the arrival of the plume, the Environment Department was successful in sampling at the Animas and San Juan rivers to obtain baseline data on the rivers' water quality, drawing samples from the Animas above Estes "Aztec", from the Animas at Farmington, and from the San Juan at Lion's Park. "Initial reports indicate that the values for pH, pre-plume arrival, were approximately 8.06 and after the passage they ranged from 7.84 - 8.08. "Laboratory analysis of further NMED-collected samples is underway as we work to gain insight into the plume's constituents," said Environment Department Water Protection Division Director Trais Kliphuis.

(more)

The Environment Department is coordinating with the Department of Game and Fish, and the Department of Agriculture to request resources from EPA to assist with cleaning wildlife covered in sludge from the spill, and to assist in the provision of safe water for watering livestock.

Please visit [www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org](http://www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org) for continuing updates and informational resources associated with the New Mexico Environment Department's activities to inform and protect communities affected by the Gold King Mine Spill.

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